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ABSTRACT

This case study evaluated the development, partial implementation, and review of an institutional and operational approach to quality management that was developed, during a decade of radical political change, at the University of the Orange Free State, resulting in the rapid transformation of higher education institutions in South African. Phase 1 of the Institutional Quality Management (IQM) initiative was based on self-evaluation (1989-1992) and a turbulent period of political change (1993-1995) that resulted in inertia in the IQM. Phase 2 marked the resumption of efforts (1996-1999) to respond to national policies and global pressures. The reaction of the University of the Orange Free State to such pressures and policies is described, and the new quality management system is outlined. Before the abolition of apartheid, universities were relatively unaffected by government pressure, and quality management was based mainly on self-evaluation. Since 1996, quality management has been geared more toward accountability than quality improvement. Four appendixes contain supplemental information and questionnaires used in the case study. (Contains 6 figures and 36 references.) (SLD)



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CUP	Committee for University Principals
DNE	Department of National Education
ETQA	Educational Training and Quality Assurance Body
GUC	Grey University College
HAIs	Historically Advantaged Institutions
HDIs	Historically Disadvantaged Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HSRC	Human Sciences and Research Council
IJC	Interim Joint Committee
IQM	Institutional Quality Management
NATED	National Education Department (NED) (number system for official documents)
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NIHEPR	National and International Higher Education Planning Requirements
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSBs	National Standard Bodies
PCB	Professional Councils and Boards
PSE	Post Secondary Education
QA	Quality Assurance
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

RSA DoE	Republic of South Africa, Department of Education
SAPSE	South African Post-Secondary Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education
SETAs	Sectorial Education Training Authorities
SGBs	Standards Generating Bodies
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UK	United Kingdom
UKOVS	University College of the Orange Free State
UOFS	University of the Orange Free State
URHE	Unit for Research into Higher Education
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

This case study will describe, and critically evaluate, the development, partial implementation and review of an institutional and operational approach to quality management which was developed, during a decade of radical political change, at the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS). The result was a process of rapid transformation in higher education institutions in South Africa.

Based on the description of the history and the context of the UOFS and the development of national policies for and global pressures on higher education in South Africa, the UOFS planned and implemented Institutional Quality Management (IQM) in two phases:

- Phase 1 of Institutional Quality Management (IQM) is based on self-evaluation (1989-1992) and a turbulent period of political change (1993 - 1995) which lead to the inertia of IQM;
- Phase 2 of Institutional Quality Management (IQM) at the UOFS is based on national policies and global pressures (1996-1999).

This booklet will explore the purpose and meaning of Phases 1 and 2 in quality management in terms of internal and external influences facing this University during the period under review.

A brief description of the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) is first exposed which explains the context of this University in relation to Colonial, Apartheid and Democratic rule, and illustrates the internal and external influences, tensions and conflicts they brought to a campus and, consequently, to its quality management.

To understand the new opportunities, realities and challenges confronting both South African higher education and the UOFS, brief perspectives are provided in critical national reports, on and legislation for, South African higher education, from 1992 up to this moment in time. These national reports and legislation, to a certain extent, interpret typical global challenges for higher education, but – of far more importance – they explain the unique challenges and opportunities facing higher education in South Africa, due to the legacy of the past. South African higher education and the UOFS are faced with newly-expressed requirements such as equity and redress, democratization, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability, which cannot all be addressed as strategic priorities in a developing country with basic dire needs of water, electricity, housing, employment, etc. Four national priorities that have been identified for national and institutional planning and, therefore, discussed in this booklet in relation to IQM, are as follows:

- a size and shape of the higher education system;
- equity;
- efficiency;
- inter-institutional co-operation.

These national policy perspectives are also discussed against global pressures for quality assurance.

Phase 1 of IQM based on self-evaluation (1989-1992) considered general reasons for quality management, such as strategic (self-) evaluation, allocation of resources, outcomes (self-) evaluation and image management, but also specific reasons which could no longer be ignored in South African higher education. In the above-mentioned first phase certain processes and contents were to be explored covering a period of four years.

This booklet summarizes the implementation of Phase 1 (1989-1995) by referring to expert overseas and South African inputs to provide perspectives on quality issues, survey questionnaires involving academic staff at the UOFS and the difficult process of mission formulation to guide planning and management in the institution. Reasons are also given why the entire four years were spent on the context of IQM without making sufficient progress with the conducting, completion and consolidation of the process of IQM as was envisaged for the first four years.

Phase 1 ends by discussing a turbulent period of the inertia of IQM at the UOFS (1993-1995). This inertia refers to national policy developments putting pressure on higher education institutions, like the UOFS, to engage in the following three challenges to:

- overcome social-structural inequalities;
- contribute to reconstruction and development;
- position South Africa to engage effectively with globalization.

Other reasons given for the inertia of IQM are related to socio-political tensions and conflict in this University, during a period of radical change from a historically white and advantaged institution to a multicultural institution facing many of the unfulfilled needs and aspirations of black students, and its community, in times of financial stringency.

The reaction of the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) to these pressures and policies is described by explaining the purposes of its new quality management system, and by providing institutional and operational quality management frameworks that could lead not only to the maintenance, but also to the enhancement of academic standards, in a democratic South Africa with high expectations of leading an African Renaissance in South African and African higher education.

I. BASIC DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE (UOFS)

1. Historical background of the UOFS

In the previous century it was customary for Orange Free State students to write the so-called 'Cape Matric' of the University of the Cape of Good Hope and then proceed to an institution which was described as '*... nothing but an English training centre, for further study*'. Due to the fact that the Dutch language and the Afrikaner's aspirations could never be fully realized in this way, President F. W. Reitz expressed the fond wish, in the late eighties, that it would be more appropriate if the Boer Republic had its own institution in the Free State Volksraad.

In April 1899 the Free State Volksraad endorsed the proposal that the two Boer Republics should found their own examining university. The Executive Council was also recommended to look into the matter. However, this proposal never took place due to the outbreak of the war with Britain in October 1899.

When the war ended various education departments in the colonies held a conference, in June 1903, and it was decided to establish a single South African university with constituent colleges in the respective colonies like the Free State. That same year the education ordinance of the Orange River Crown Colony made it possible to introduce 'classes for such subjects' as usually lectured at universities, by using public funds.

The aforesaid was not initiated until Lieutenant-Governor Sir Goold Adams gave his support in 1904. The members of the *Grey College Reunion* welcomed this. An amount of £125,000 was made available for a new Grey College school building, and a university college building west of Bloemfontein, built on a piece of land donated by the City Council of Bloemfontein. The availability of funds, plus an independent building, were the first steps in the direction of the dream of a Free State institution for higher education.

The *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) in Bloemfontein was founded on 28 January 1904. The official name at that time was the *Grey University College* (GUC). The University then had a student population of only six matriculated students who had registered for a complete BA degree course, which was initially presented through the medium of English. The most important reason for the slow expansion in those days was due to the fact that the GUC was very English-orientated from the start and did not satisfy the needs and wishes of the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking Free States.

In 1935, however, the name was changed from the *Grey University College* (GUC) to the *University College of the Orange Free State* (UKOVS) and after 1948 the teaching policy changed to Afrikaans, which had been advocated by prominent Afrikaans leaders. These two actions contributed to make the institution more committed to the Free State white Afrikaans community.

On 18 March 1950 the University became independent by a private *Act of Parliament* and since then it has been known as the UOFS. Between the fifties and late eighties the University had been gradually growing as an Afrikaans university, which primarily made provision for white, Afrikaans-speaking students. This aspect will again be discussed under the enrolment perspectives (see *Section 2, para. 3*).

During this period from 1950-1980 several developments took place that well relate to a general commitment of the University to establish itself as a well-organized institution striving towards excellence in teaching/learning and research. Certain statements and developments during this period might illustrate this drive for excellence:

- During this period, many new buildings and faculties were erected to provide quality facilities and serve the region better. (e.g. five new residences – especially for the growing number of women students from rural areas – a new university library, because it was considered to be a direct reflection of the University's academic quality, new faculties of economics and administration sciences, agriculture, theology and medicine. Plus an Odeon with a beautiful organ for music concerts, and an auditorium).
- Although the University, through its vice-chancellors, claimed that it wanted to remain a small institution where staff and students should experience collegiality while striving towards scholarship, the University grew from a few hundred students to 7,000 students during this period.
- In the late seventies a newly appointed rector stated that this University was now sufficiently established to concentrate more on research, and provided greater funding and support staff for research and incentive for publications that would more efficiently serve the needs of the community, business and industry both regionally and nationally.

During the early eighties, black leaders from the democratic movement in the region demanded university facilities and opportunities for the majority black community. Within the framework of the Apartheid legislation of those days, the UOFS provided strong support to the black community via the establishment

of two undergraduate campuses of *Vista University*, which had been specifically established to deal with the needs and aspirations of black people for university education in the Free State and in five other urban areas in South Africa. The UOFS slowly opened its doors to black students at post-graduate level and continuing education programmes from literacy to in-service training of professionals (e.g. medical doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.).

From the beginning of the nineties, this higher education dispensation of segregated universities for blacks and whites was strongly opposed and the political arrangements since 1994 have introduced a new democratic dispensation of open institutions for all South Africans, bringing radical change to all universities in South Africa.

2. The purpose of the UOFS in transformation

While dealing with the first phase of *Quality Assurance* (QA) at the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS), mention will be made of the mission formulation of the University which led to a controversial mission statement in the late eighties with a view to, amongst others, meaningful quality management. The fact that the mission statement formulated in 1989 was simply no longer acceptable in a new political dispensation, as well as how it became essential to formulate a mission which could fit into the new dispensation after 1994, will now be briefly discussed.

Within the framework of international and national changes, the UOFS reformulated its vision and mission by considering the following:

In its vision statement the UOFS emphasized the ideal to remain a top quality university in the new South Africa.

First, this means that the UOFS would like to go on being a 'typical' University. This implies that the practice of science through teaching and learning, research and community service is the main focus and reason for the existence of the institution. In addition, the vision statement emphasizes two aspects, namely:

- **top quality ;**
- **new South Africa, Africa and Free State relevance.**

With this vision, the mission emphasizes quality and relevance by accommodating typical academic issues that are accepted globally. The UOFS should create independent thought and critical debate. It should continue to be a centre of scholarship and internationalization though overseas institutional partnerships should be promoted in order to utilize to an optimum available talents, technology, expertise and resources to promote quality etc. Relevance should mean that the UOFS would contribute to solving the whole spectrum of development needs of the region and the country. It should also mean inequalities of the past would receive attention, equal opportunities and accessibility for the disadvantaged would be promoted and a new unity would be forged accompanied by the accommodation of cultural diversity in a new South Africa.

The **management of change** was not new to the UOFS. Since its inception in 1904 it has been a changing university (e.g. referring to the change of the medium of instruction policy). Starting as an English-medium institution it progressed through double medium of English-Dutch and English-Afrikaans, then exclusively Afrikaans to as it is today - a well-established multicultural university with a parallel medium English-Afrikaans instructional policy.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned vision and mission ideas, the University required more specialized staff to cope with the various

pressures/demands for quality and relevant teaching and learning and more internationally recognized staff for quality research made relevant by developing disadvantaged students from a gender and race perspective. This meant 'growing our own timber' for teaching/learning and research. In the past it was clear that academic standards varied within South African universities. However, determining the quality of standards of a university has been acknowledged to be a complex endeavour, because quality cannot be measured throughout and quantified precisely in all respects.

3. Enrolment perspective

A rapid growth period of 28 per cent student enrolment occurred between 1993 and 1998, but according to the Department of Education student enrolments declined by 7 per cent in South Africa in 1999. The enrolment growth in this University from 1990 to 1999 is demonstrated below (*Table 1*). It is also noticeable that there was a slight decline in 1999, especially in the number of undergraduates.

Table 1. UOFS per head student enrolment

UOFS	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
White	8,978	8,774	8,554	8,222	7,827	7,449	6,811	6,245	5,715	5,479
Black	394	517	633	827	1425	2,444	3,276	3,952	4,671	4,894
Total	9,372	9,291	9,187	9,049	9,252	9,893	10,087	10,197	10,386	10,373

It is a well known fact that an increase in higher-education numbers (massification) has always led to a concern with regard to a decline in quality. Nevertheless, the current tendency towards declining numbers also gives rise to concern, because it is related to extensive quality problems in schools. The school system simply cannot produce enough quality students to be accommodated in higher education. There are, of course, other reasons for the tendency of declining

numbers, but they are not discussed in this booklet. At this stage it might also be important to provide additional information with regard to student numbers in the various academic faculties as shown in *Table 2*.

The example mentioned in *Table 2* demonstrates the increase in student numbers, as a whole, at UOFS and the growth or decline in certain faculties (i.e. law, agriculture and theology).

Table 2. UOFS student numbers in the different faculties

Faculties	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Occasional studies/ CPP	298	253	224	284	542	691	655	845	718	574
Humanities	3,263	3,189	3,134	3,074	3,133	3,548	3,516	2,951	3,327	3,306
Law	845	908	969	974	958	949	915	819	664	681
Natural Sciences	1,169	1,209	1,174	1,209	1,251	1,354	1,534	1,616	1,509	1,492
Agriculture	696	623	566	489	487	473	492	545	553	538
Economic and Management Sciences	1,640	1,629	1,624	1,542	1,400	1,420	1,504	1,705	1,684	1,816
Health Sciences	1,288	1,304	1,316	1,296	1,325	1,327	1,347	1,867	1,826	1,853
Theology	173	176	180	181	156	131	124	111	105	113
TOTAL	9,372	9,291	9,187	9,049	9,252	9,893	10,087	10,459	10,386	10,373

As already indicated in *Table 2*, student composition changed dramatically at all higher education institutions during the period 1994 to 1999. In 1994 the student composition consisted of 84,5 per cent white versus 15,4 per cent black students, while by 1999 it had changed to 52,8 per cent white and 47,1 per cent black students. These changes put pressure on University management into taking deliberate action to move towards a multicultural institution that

would accommodate the cultural diversity of the student population at the UOFS. Traditional white academics often regard this cultural change as being dangerous for academic standards and the UOFS is no exception. The growth of disadvantaged student numbers aggravated fears of 'sliding standards', which could only be dealt with by providing more academic support, meaning less time for research.

4. Current challenges

Due to the multicultural nature of this University and with the increased access of disadvantaged students, it became imperative to develop different student support services and to implement bridging courses to undergraduate and graduate studies. This demonstrates part of the UOFS strategic planning for improvement, renewal, and progress to deal with the intricate diversity issues. These efforts are, of course, directly linked to academic standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

In the recent past, up until the nineties, the UOFS was characterized as a stable, Afrikaans-speaking, mostly white university – which was part of Apartheid policies – isolated from the global higher education context. Currently, the University is confronted with inequalities and distortions deriving from South Africa's legacy (e.g. inequitable distribution of access opportunities for students and staff along axes of race, gender, class and geographic discrimination as well as vast disparities between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged communities and students).

In the late eighties, the UOFS was also confronted with the revolutionary climate of political change that peaked in South Africa in the eighties. Therefore, radical changes and various unpredictable factors created an unstable and even a volatile period of conflict. This highlighted the need for transformation, including *Quality Assurance*

(QA) to address the deficiencies in the system which inhibited its ability to meet the moral, social and economic demands of the new South Africa and to address a context of unprecedented national and global opportunities and challenges in the nineties and in the 21st century.

In addition, one of the current challenges for the UOFS is to strive towards excellence in the research area. Bearing in mind typical research criteria of publications in accredited journals and research grants, this University was rated as one of the best universities in South Africa. According to above research criteria, it was placed sixth in the unofficial ranking of the 21 universities up to the early nineties – hence its research capacity was highly esteemed. In 1999 the UOFS identified six applicable strategic focus areas in order to enhance its research expertise again: (i) management and leadership development, (ii) environmental studies, (iii) biotechnology, (iv) health care and nutrition, (v) policy development and persistent human development and (vi) capacity building. New niches had to be chosen and capacity developed at the UOFS due to the realities in this country. National planning and policy formulation for higher education also took place at this time, which also strongly influenced the practice of higher education. These issues and policies will be addressed as follows, with a special emphasis on quality.

II. THE NATIONAL POLICY PLANNING CONTEXT AND GLOBAL PRESSURES FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

1. New realities, opportunities and challenges

New realities, opportunities and challenges facing South African higher education when the *African National Congress* (ANC) Government took over in 1994, were the following:

- The higher education context was confronted with a dual claim for increased participation, driven by demographic and developmental imperatives. On the one hand, there was a socio-political demand for access from larger groups of school dropouts (e.g. certain population groups and social classes who were largely excluded from higher education). On the other hand, there was also an socio-economic demand for highly trained person power that was equipped with a wider range of skills and competencies (e.g. in order to meet the requirements of economic development).
- Due to the fact that reconstruction and development policies and practices had loomed large during South Africa's transitional phase, new research agendas and learning programmes would be required to mobilize the cultural, social and economic potential of South Africa and its people.
- South African higher education had been shifting from isolation to globalization. As South Africa located itself in this network of global exchanges and interactions, higher education would have to produce certain skills and technological innovations for

successful participation in the global market. Equipping a new generation with the requisite cultural values and communication competencies was also vital in order for them to become citizens of the international and global community.

- The rapid international development of the 'learning society' had been crucial for South African higher education, because it not only placed a premium upon lifelong and continuous education, but also upon a growing array of public and private organizations sharing in knowledge production with higher education institutions. The challenge for higher education lay within its ability to adapt to these changes and to sustain its role as a specialized producer of knowledge. This had a definite impact on quality, where the institution could operate more effectively and efficiently within a competitive market.

According to the above-mentioned realities, opportunities and challenges, it was felt that South Africa needed a new higher education dispensation with new national policies.

2. Quality Assurance (QA) and management

As already mentioned a national plan and system for *Quality Assurance* (QA) did not exist in South African higher education until 1994. In preparation for a new dispensation, the *African National Congress* (ANC) Government made a very important investigation into higher education, and based on this investigation, the *National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE) was appointed to ensure informed legislation for higher education. In the discussion of quality management at a specific institution such as the UOFS, it was and still is important to at least understand how quality has been dealt with in the different national policy documents.

National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992)

The *National Education Policy Investigation* (NEPI) was a project of the *National Education Co-ordinating Committee* (NECC) conducted between December 1990 and August 1992. The object of this project was to interrogate policy options in all areas of education, within a value framework, derived from the ideals of the broad democratic movement. NEPI has tried to serve three principal functions:

- provision of information, and a lens to focus on the values which underpin specific policies;
- stimulation of public debate on education policy in all spheres of society: from the foregoing, it is clear that the NEPI reports did not present an NECC position in education, rather they marked a starting-point for what was undoubtedly a protracted debate;
- development of capacity for policy analysis.

NEPI signalled a new and highly successful departure for collaborative effort amongst political leaders, academics and practitioners. The project provided a foundation for building a more legitimate and efficient education system, for a democratic and prosperous South Africa.

Therefore, NEPI represented the results of collective work, which is an analysis of policy options for an equitable education system in a democratic South Africa. NEPI was governed by the following five principles: (i) non-sexism; (ii) non-racism; (iii) redress; (iv) democracy; and (v) a unitary system.

According to NEPI, highly differentiated skills, as well as equitable access, were imperative in the *Post Secondary Education* (PSE) sector (e.g. consisting of three categories, namely universities, technikons

and colleges). Addressing these issues into a workable compromise was likely to pose a rigorous test for the political will and social responsibility of institutions in this sector. After all, it was expected from this sector to produce innovations and capacity that would drive development. Quality Assurance was regarded, therefore, as vital, and the focus was on improvement.

The fact that this sector consisted of three categories resulted in duplication, inefficiency and inequity. The following aspects were proposed to improve the quality of this sector:

- elimination of rigid sub-sectoral distinctions;
- development of equivalent funding and organizational procedures;
- allowance for greater mobility between institutions;
- organization of an augmented pool of institutions on a regional basis.

Although this was expected to definitely facilitate regional rationalization and implementation of regional redress quotas, it could have produced inter-regional inequities. In addition, the PSE sector was highly differentiated and therefore regarded as the most difficult sector in which to achieve representative and equitable enrolment and staff targets. Therefore, state regulation, as well as consultation and monitoring boards at regional and national levels, were vital for attaining an equitable and quality *Post Secondary Education* (PSE) system.

Concern for inequalities and inequities versus the economic development of the country had to be balanced, as did the major concern resultant to it, i.e. for the quality of PSE programmes. Although access strategies had been designed, they could lead to high levels of government expenditure. In addition, certain equity strategies could even lead to a decline in the quality of the system

(e.g. all resource allocations in the system had to be equalized). The problem with the latter was that it could have an unacceptable effect on the socio-economic development of the country, namely high equity plus low quality, which could have led to low economic growth. Additionally, in a society such as that of South Africa, that has gross social inequalities, education differentiation tends to accentuate them. Education differentiation implied that specialist skills required differentiation of curriculum, perhaps of institution, probably of finance. Therefore, specialized skills were vital for the economy, which had to be competitive in world markets. On the one hand, education differentiation appeared to be important for development, whereas, on the other hand, differentiation highlighted potential tension between values of equity and development. However, systemic articulation seemed the best way to facilitate equity under conditions of differentiation (i.e. to facilitate education mobility, but not to guarantee it).

National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) (1995)

The National Minister of Education at that time, Prof. S. Bengu, appointed the NCHE in 1995 to investigate and make recommendations on the restructuring of the higher education system by undertaking a situation analysis, formulating a vision for higher education and putting forward policy proposals to ensure the development of a well-planned, integrated, high quality system of higher education. Of particular importance were recommendations with regard to quality.

The reconstruction and development needs of the South African higher education system stemmed from profound deficiencies.

- The inequitable distribution of access and opportunities for students and staff with regard to race, gender, class and geographic distribution. This led to discrepancies and imbalance in the ratios

(e.g. black and female staff compared with white male staff or historically disadvantaged institutions versus historically advantaged institutions).

- A persistent contrast between higher education outputs and the needs of the modernizing economy. Discriminatory practices had, for example, limited the access of black and female students in the fields of science, engineering, technology and commerce. This was detrimental to social and economic development.
- Inadequately contextualized teaching strategies and delivery modes prevented adaptations from being made in order to meet large student numbers and the diversity of lifelong learners.
- Organizational and administrative fragmentation and weak accountability inhibited planning and co-ordination.
- The higher education system prevented a democratic ethos and a critical civil society with a culture of tolerance, public debate, accommodation of differences and competing interests.

The NCHE had identified quality as one of the important principles that should guide the restructuring of South African higher education. In practice it implied evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view to improvement, renewal or progress. Any evidence of poor quality would be a source of concern and a reason for reform. In addition, the search for quality implied maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, including both the compilations of minimum expectations and requirements and striving for the ideal of excellence. The latter could fluctuate from one context to the other, depending on the specific purpose pursued. Quality, therefore, was occasionally equated as 'fitness for purpose'. With regard to higher education, international recognition could also

serve as a vital normative notion in determining and assessing academic and educational standards.

Quality was not only an internal institutional concern, but also a crucial ingredient in the new relationship between higher education and government. Thus, it was expected that government steer the system via incentives and evaluation of institutions and programmes rather than by detailed regulation and legislation. In order to address differences in quality across institutional programmes, a comprehensive, development-orientated *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) was needed. The QAS should include the following three functions, namely: (i) institutional auditing, (ii) programme accreditation, and (iii) quality promotion.

Effectiveness and efficiency were also vital *National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE) principles for assessing past and future higher education systems. Effectiveness demanded constant review of aims and objectives, taking into consideration the fluctuating needs. Efficiency demanded constant improvement of methods and instruments needed to achieve these aims and objectives. Quality assurance thus played a pivotal role in both these principles, and the practicing of these principles led to the proposal of a *Quality Assurance System* (QAS).

Quality Assurance should also have an impact on the curriculum, which was quite difficult to address. It had been recognized by the NCHE that curriculum reform at micro-levels was of the utmost importance to transformation and quality enhancement in higher education. However, the precise nature of the micro-curriculum could not be determined at national level and was closely related to the context within which it was located. The NCHE believed that the combination of growth, increased responsiveness to social and economic needs and partnerships would influence change in the

curriculum, and make it more connected to the South African context.

In conclusion, the NCHE's proposal of a *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) for South African higher education could be described as follows:

A *Higher Education Quality Council* (HEQC) should be established as a *Committee of the Council on Higher Education* (CHE). A *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) should recognize the CHE as an 'umbrella co-ordinating body' for *Quality Assurance* (QA) in higher education programmes. The CHE should exercise this authority via the quality Committee, the HEQC.

The HEQC should be responsible for institutional auditing and programme accreditation, and should be managed by a board made up of individuals drawn from inside and outside the higher education system.

The HEQC should encourage and monitor quality promotion activities within higher education, but should not undertake such activities itself. This task should be transferred to a body such as the *Quality Promotion Unit* (QPU) of the *Committee for University Principals* (CUP) which should have an expanded mandate to undertake this function.

**The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
and the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)
Act (Act No. 58 of 1995)**

The South African higher education system had to function within the framework of the *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) Act which established the *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) as a body responsible for developing the regulations for/of

the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF) and overseeing the implementation thereof. The five key functions spelled out for SAQA were the following:

- oversee the development of the NQF;
- formulate and publish policies and criteria for:
 - registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards;
 - accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of standards and qualifications;
- oversee the implementation of the NQF such as:
 - the registration of accreditation bodies;
 - the registration of national standards and qualifications;
 - ensuring compliance with accreditation provisions;
 - ensuring international compatibility of standards and qualifications;
- advise the Minister (of Education and Labour) on registration of standards and qualifications;
- be responsible for the finances of SAQA.

The emergence of the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF) should be viewed as the first and foremost national policy initiative for the restructuring of South African higher education curricula. This step brought a changed focus (as dictated by environmental influences) in higher education curricula – from an emphasis on formal knowledge to an emphasis on skills ahead of knowledge. This initiative was directed at implementing a system with a holistic view of the personal, social and economic needs of South African society (NCHE, 1996).

At the national level, both policy planning and formulation led to the *South African Qualifications Authority Act* (SAQA Act No. 58 of 1995) which established the *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) as the body responsible for developing the rules of the NQF and overseeing the implementation thereof. SAQA was also charged with the formulation and publication of policies and criteria for the registration of the bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards and/or qualifications, to define the levels of complexity as indicated by the required learning abilities on the NQF and to determine the format in which qualifications or unit standards must be submitted for registration.

According to SAQA the organizational purposes of the NQF divide all education and training in South Africa into 12 organizing fields. These fields are not based on traditional disciplines or subject areas but should be viewed as a convenient mixture of both. In order for these above-mentioned organizing fields to operate, *National Standards Bodies* (NSBs) were introduced which are supposed to oversee the establishment and recognition of *Standards Generating Bodies* (SGBs).

National Standards Bodies (NSBs) have, amongst others, the following functions:

- define and recommend to the Authority the boundaries of the field and, within this, a framework of sub-fields;
- ensure that the work of the SGBs meets SAQA requirements;
- recommend the registration of qualifications and standards;
- oversee the update and review of qualifications and standards;
- liaison with *Educational Training Quality Assurance* bodies (ETQAs);
- define requirements and mechanisms for the moderation of standards and qualifications.

Although the NSBs oversee the activities of the SGBs, the registration of the SGBs for various organizational fields should be viewed as the first step in the proposed linear curriculum process. SGBs have, amongst others, the following responsibilities:

- generate standards and qualifications in accordance with Authority requirements in identified sub-fields and levels;
- recommend standards and qualifications to the *National Standards Bodies* (NSBs);
- assure any other functions delegated by its *National Standards Bodies* (NSBs).

New qualifications are generated by, and within, *Standards Generating Bodies* (SGBs), which are formed by key education and training stakeholder interest groups and experts in a particular learning area. Once an SGB is recognized or established, it is issued with a certificate of registration by the NSB who defines its briefs in terms of the standards and qualifications that it will generate.

Another important body at the operationalization level of SAQA is the *Education and Training Quality Assurers* (ETQAs). ETQAs are responsible for the following:

- accrediting constituent providers for specified *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF) registered standards or qualifications;
- monitoring the quality of provision by these providers;
- facilitating the moderation of assessment amongst constituent providers, registering assessors;
- certifying constituent learners and
- co-operating with moderating bodies (providers in this context are defined as bodies that deliver and manage the assessment of

learning programmes culminating in specified NQF standards and/or qualifications.

At least half of the existing university qualifications could be accredited by existing Professional Councils and Boards, provided these bodies have formed Quality Assurance sub-committees that meet the general requirements set by SAQA for ETQAs and are accredited by primary ETQA for the university system. In this model the same professional boards would have separate standard-setting subcommittees which could be augmented according to SAQA regulations for *Standard Generating Bodies* (SGBs) in order to meet SAQA requirements and could function according to the standard-setting side of the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF) system.

Statistics from the beginning of 2000 indicate that approximately 50 members at SAQA support the work of the SAQA Board, 12 NSBs, and 103 SGBs, consisting of 397 members.

In October 1995 the SAQA Act was established to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as well as for matters connected therewith. The five key functions spelled out for SAQA were the following:

- oversee the development of the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF);
- formulate and publish policies and criteria for:
 - the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards;
 - the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of standards and qualifications;
- oversee the implementation of the NQF such as:

- the registration of accreditation bodies;
 - the registration of national standards and qualifications;
 - ensure compliance with accreditation provisions;
 - ensure international compatibility of standards and qualifications;
- advise the Minister (of Education and Labour) on the registration of standards and qualifications;
 - take charge of the finances of SAQA.

The guiding principles of SAQA were to consult and co-operate with specified bodies and contribute to the needs of both learners and nation.

The core strategy of SAQA was to develop and sustain policies, procedures and infrastructure for the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF), actively supported by key stakeholders in education and training.

In the Higher Education sector, SAQA is the responsible body for the registration of qualifications. Until new qualifications in higher education will be scrutinized by the *National Standards Bodies* (NSBs) and the *Standards Generating Bodies* (SGBs), the *Interim Joint Committee* (IJC) will advise SAQA on registration.

The NQF is also considered to be the linchpin of the government's plan for education and training in South Africa as well as the instrument through which access, quality, redressment and development effectively engage in the move towards a true learning society.

The standard of a qualification in South Africa is a co-operative process between the SAQA and a particular institution, through the

NQF, which primarily depends on the disposition of the institution for *Quality Assurance* (QA), as well as for the management level thereof, and ensures that their qualification is up to standard. The main processes of SAQA and the NQF begin with national goals, such as economic growth, employment, and skill development, in order to redress past inequalities, improving productivity and international competitiveness. In order to achieve these national goals, the following are important:

- *Skills Development Strategy* - aims to determine what skills are required, which among them are of greatest priority to the country, and to devise a national strategy for their development;
- *Education and Training Strategy* - assists in achieving national goals by providing a competent workforce that enables the country to meet both national and international challenges.

In the implementation of the NQF by SAQA certain problems are being experienced that will also reflect on the *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) for higher education in South Africa. Some of these problems are the following:

- paradigm shifts in and high expectations for curriculum development;
- lack of infrastructure and resources (e.g. human, physical and financial) to monitor policy implementation;
- lack of continuous meaningful communication with all stakeholders;
- lack of clear leadership from the board to operational staff levels;
- management and administration problems have a negative effect (e.g. causing much uncertainty, duplication of work and frustration);
- the role of the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) is uncertain;

- lack of expertise and/or lack of staff numbers for the implementation of NQF/SAQA.

Recognizing these problems and issues is one thing, but in-depth deliberations are necessary to solve them. They cannot be discussed here in detail, but it can be mentioned that both serious consideration of these problems and adaptation of policy at national level are needed, because they are a dilemma for institutions in the planning and implementation of *Institutional Quality Management* (IQM).

Existing Quality Assurance mechanisms in universities and technikons

Quality Assurance Systems (QAS) vary amongst countries, but five common features may nonetheless be distinguished, namely the inclusion of an initial self-evaluation process followed by an external assessment, higher education to a certain extent owned the quality system, the external evaluation was co-ordinated by an independent body, the results of the evaluation were made public and in nearly all countries negative sanctions could be the consequence of the assessment procedure. In South Africa, Quality Assurance mechanisms varied across the three sectors. College sectors used national, provincial and departmental examinations for both certificate and diploma degrees.

In the technikon sector, the *Certification Council for Technikon Education* (SERTEC) was operating to perform a programme accreditation function, while the university sector assured quality via professional accreditation (if applicable) and through a peer-based system in external examination. The purpose of the Council in terms of the Technikon Education Act (Act No. 88 of 1986) was to ensure that corresponding technikon certificates issued by the Council represented the same standard of education and examination.

SERTEC has seen itself in the dual role of being instrumental both in satisfying the demands for accountability on the technikons, while simultaneously promoting, in terms of – or despite – its legal authority, the improvement of quality in technikon education where necessary. The Council has adequate proof that it has succeeded in doing both.

Technikons are subject to policies and practices concerning quality laid down by SERTEC, established in 1986. SERTEC developed from a certification towards an accreditation body with a quality monitoring function, in co-operation with the relevant professional boards and councils. It has for many years successfully operated and integrated a qualifications certification/accreditation system for technikons and agriculture colleges and has begun to develop a broader *Quality Assurance* (QA) function. Over the years SERTEC has shifted the emphasis from legally imposed certification towards more voluntary participation in the Quality Assurance process, and acceptance of quality monitoring by technikons. SERTEC performs its programme accreditation functions within a context of a far greater degree of curricular standardization for technikons than is the case with universities and in conjunction with a wide number of programme stakeholders, primarily with the various professional boards. The Council introduced a process of closed co-operation between technikons, employers and professional bodies for quality monitoring at the programme, as opposed to the institutional level – a system that is often more effective in promoting improvement where improvement is necessary. To ensure their not having to face the consequences of offering 'non-recognized programmes', technikons must implement recommendations emanating from SERTEC's evaluations.

In the university sector, the *Quality Promotion Unit* (QPU) served, since 1996, as the Quality Assurance agency for the universities with

the sole purpose of quality promotion. The QPU was established by the *Committee of University Principals* (CUP) to support the universities in their efforts to establish IQM strategies and structures so desperately needed due to new legislation and both factors and reasons (see above) for critically analyzing quality in all university functions.

The QPU was established in 1996 with the following dual purpose:

- assist universities in conducting productive institutional self-evaluation at institutional and programme levels;
- create a basis in the higher education system for the development and promotion of accreditation for purposes of articulation.

The *Committee for University Principals* (CUP) was of the opinion that ownership had to reside in the university system in order to guarantee both acceptance by universities and credibility with stakeholders.

The following terms of reference were proposed for the QPU:

- The QPU would consider and review mechanisms and procedures used in individual institutions for monitoring and improving the quality of their programmes.
- The reviews would focus on the appropriateness of quality improving mechanisms and procedures as well as on their effectiveness as applied in practice.
- The QPU would work towards the diffusion of good practice in quality improvement throughout the university system.

In practice, these terms of reference meant that the QPU, with its review teams, would operate in open consultation with individual

universities and that provision was made for the incorporation, into final reports, of institutional comments and explanations arising from interim reports. Reviews initially focused on institutional *Quality Assurance* (QA) and were later followed up by programme assessment. The emphasis of the reports had been on quality improvement as well as on identifying and on disseminating good practice. Institutions were to be evaluated against their own mission statements and their own sets of goals and objectives. A representative sample of the University's staff would be interviewed during the official sessions during the two and a half days' audit. This included top, senior and middle managers, academic staff, unionized staff, student leaders, a cross-section of students on campus and a few representatives from the community. Given considerable differences between institutions, no attempts were to be made at ranking institutions according to a set of generic criteria. Final reports were to become public documents. A 'good audit report' was not a stamp of approval for quality in the particular institution, but rather proof that the institution cared about quality and that it was designing and working on *Quality Assurance Systems* (QAS) (e.g. the institution would be on its way to becoming a quality institution). However, the QPU Board reserved the right to report separately to the institution's vice-chancellor on issues of particular sensitivity.

The QPU focused exclusively on the institutional quality management level, where it conducted a total of ten institutional audits up to the end of 1998 before the South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA) decided to cease all Unit activities. The UOFS was not audited in 1999, as it should have been, due to the closure of the QPU. During 1999 the *Council for Higher Education* created a commission of enquiry to scientifically evaluate the work of the QPU. This commission made the following important observations:

- The main critique against the QPU was that its evaluations were not rigorous enough;
- However, the real reason for its limited success was that the QPU staff of two people had been under severe strain, with a heavy workload, combined with insufficient funding, technological support and human resources.
- The focus of the QPU on improvement and on institutional quality management systems was understandable and sensible, considering the limited human and financial resources in South Africa.
- The implementation of QPU audits had the benefit of a manual containing clear and explicit guidelines. The three-day visits provided adequate time for discussions with a broad range of stakeholders and the opportunity to pursue audit trails of quality management procedures in operation. The self-evaluation process appeared to have been generally regarded as a useful exercise, although the resultant reports were of varying quality.
- The QPU exercise had also had some beneficial outcomes. It has given South Africa some useful experience in *Quality Assurance* (QA) at the institutional level. It has helped create a largely positive response to quality issues in universities, and has brought forth within institutions the importance of good management information systems. It achieved all the above-mentioned things without imposing an overly bureaucratic approach to quality matters.

Another avenue of Quality Assurance existed: the technikon sector. The *Certification Council for Technikon Education* (SERTEC) was established for technikons in the higher education sector. This *Quality Assurance* agency had to function within constraints determined by

the *Certification Council for Technikon Education Act* (No. 88, 1986 [RSA, 1986]). SERTEC had gone through various developmental phases (i.e. from a certification body to an accreditation body and finally to a quality monitoring body). Since 1986, SERTEC has played a very significant role in the *Quality Assurance* (QA) of the technikon sector focusing on programme assessment. However, SERTEC was not at any stage acceptable as a Quality Assurance agency for universities in South Africa, given the radically high level of autonomy of South African Higher Education Institutions.

The White Paper on higher education transformation (1997)

Preceding the *White Paper on higher education transformation* (RSA DoE, 1997), the *Green Paper on higher education* (RSA DoE, 1996) affirmed all the NCHE proposals regarding *Quality Assurance* and programme assessment and accreditation. One of the shortcomings of the Green Paper, however, was that it still demonstrated conflicting and contradictory perspectives regarding the functions and procedures of the proposed *Quality Assurance System* (QAS).

In the *White Paper on Higher education transformation* (RSA DoE, 1997), quality was spelt out more concretely and dealt with in two ways.

■ *QAS was described according to certain principles*

- **Quality:** The pursuit of the principle of quality means maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with, and in the sense of ideals of excellence which should be aimed at. These expectations and ideals may differ from one context to another, partly depending on the specific purposes pursued. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating

services and products against set standards with a view to improvement, renewal or progress.

- **Effectiveness:** An effective system or institution functions in such a way that it either leads to desired outcomes or achieves desired objectives.
- **Efficiency:** An efficient system or institution is one that works well without unnecessary duplication or waste within the bounds of affordability and sustainability. It also makes optimal use of available means.

The above-mentioned principles (i.e. *effectiveness* and *efficiency*) are both related to, and distinct from, quality.

■ *Reasons for legislating a QAS for higher education*

It was clear that the official policy document for *Quality Assurance* was still fragmented and therefore to be completed by supplying detailed information. Furthermore, the process was complicated not only by constant government pressure on higher education institutions to become more independent with regard to government funding, but also by the continuous transformation of South African higher education institutions. The following problematic areas needed to be addressed urgently.

- **The problem of overloading.** Higher education institutions were in a situation of being continuously visited by assessors.
- **The cost of the Quality Assurance System (QAS):** Cost calculation should include both the Quality Assurance agency and its activities as well as the institutional costs involved.
- **The nature of judgements:** Judging the quality of teaching/learning differs relatively from judging the quality of research/

support/management. Another factor that complicated this situation was limited expertise. (Who was willing to be involved?)

- **The issue of standards:** From the political side there was pressure to maintain high standards. This was complicated by a very difficult climate, within which funds were declining, and student numbers were rising.

This section has already provided an explanation of the most important policy documents and legislation such as *National Education Policy Investigation* (NEPI), the *National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE), the Green Paper and the White Paper on *Higher education transformation* that increased the pressure on IQM. In addition, other external pressures developed that made IQM imperative in the new dispensation of higher education in South Africa.

There was increasing evidence of globalization of Quality Assurance in international practice. In developing countries, massification had increased to such an extent that it was quite difficult to identify new groups of students. Higher education institutions in these countries were now striving for new global markets for growth in order to obtain additional resources that would compensate for the constant decrease in subsidies for higher education. In addition, rapid globalization of the marketplace and the needs of higher education were inevitable. At the core of these changes were continuous economic growth and the provision of more opportunities for lifelong learning for all possible students.

During May 1995 an organization of official accrediting agencies, the *International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education* (which already represents 50 countries) held a Conference in the Netherlands. It was recognized during the proceedings that

the aim of global accreditation had not been reached, but it was nonetheless already clear that multiple accreditation was a predictable outcome when a country seeks economic viability, as well as outreach to overseas students.

It was vital to determine how to balance the national needs and global trends, within the South African context, which would define its educational sector as well as its economic and social well being. One of the initial tasks of the higher education sector was to confront the increased global demand for majority access to multiple levels of education before it could clearly state what exactly was meant by quality higher education. Economic and social growth would be best served by transcending the secondary level of education that was not only accessible and diversified in its levels and purposes, but also promoted continued learning. It would be difficult to achieve and maintain a quality institution if the higher education system of which it was a part was too narrowly defined for national purposes. Simultaneously, South Africa was regarded as the leader for Southern Africa, including the neighbouring islands of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the potential for regional co-ordination and co-operation was enormous and had to be seized (Lenn, 1996).

Growing pressures in the South African context in the late nineties

Besides national policies, there were other important external reasons that explained an increase in strong pressure on IQM. First, several practices such as external examination, departmental evaluation, student evaluation of staff and programmes, external evaluation by professional boards, etc. had constantly received more critique of stakeholders, due to the fact that these evaluation practices were regarded as neither rigorous, nor sufficiently followed-up with a view for quality improvement. Furthermore higher education

institutions rarely made use of auditors and assessors provided new higher education legislation, which would have made the results of some of the mentioned Quality Assurance procedures more objective from an accountability perspective.

The *Historically Advantaged Institutions* (HAIs) – e.g. the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) – were more inclined to make an issue of quality because of national policies and external pressure, but during this debate on Quality Assurance and management all factors that had influenced quality at HDIs came to the fore. What also influenced Quality Assurance was in the late nineties: the UOFS had already been accommodating almost as many black students as white and was therefore already battling with many of the issues that HDIs had experienced in the eighties and nineties. *Historically Disadvantaged Institutions* (HDIs) were eager to promote the internal quality of programmes and offerings, but were suspicious and troubled with regard to the motives of the perceived abrupt interest in Quality Assurance and management. This was due to past political imbalance (e.g. the non-competitiveness of *Historically Disadvantaged Institutions* (HDIs) in comparison with *Historically Advantaged Institutions* (HAIs (white))). HDIs felt compelled to position systems and strategies in order to compete favourably, both nationally and internationally, within the modern market-based higher education system, but they felt that the playing-fields should first be leveled through equity and redress. In the discussion on the size and shape of the higher education system, HDIs suspected that *Quality Assurance* (QA) would be misused for the purposes of rationalization and as a device to legitimize their destruction and liquidation. They considered the thinking behind *Quality Assurance* (QA) to be a way to force HDIs into a niche that would primarily give them the responsibility of conducting bridging programmes and doing undergraduate work as second-class universities in a new South Africa.

Massification of higher education was seen as a threat to the existence of HDIs because they were confronted with the question of how to provide quality programmes with limited facilities and resources.

According to Noruwana (1996) the following list of issues had to be clarified in order to promote quality in *Historically Disadvantaged Institutions* (HDIs):

- Clarify the nature and definition of quality envisaged by the institution.
- Sensitize stakeholders to the need of *Quality Assurance*.
- Adapt the existing culture of HDIs by changing both behaviour and attitudes of those that studied and worked there.
- Students had to be at the core of the *Quality Assurance* process.
- *Quality Assurance* is a team effort; thus team building and staff training for problem-solving strategies are vital.
- For leadership teams with a clear focus on quality improvement.
- Redesign main focus areas from the start.
- Develop baseline research and databases on all aspects of the institution.
- Finalize strategic plans and mission statements that would guide the *Quality Assurance* process.
- Provide specific budget for *Quality Assurance* (QA).

It was vital for HDIs to remain committed to the goal of increased maturity and to be aware that *Quality Assurance* (QA) is a long-term commitment – it is not something being achieved but something to strive for.

At HAIs, like the UOFS, the number of black students was steadily growing and these institutions were suddenly faced with many of the above-mentioned issues being experienced by HDIs.

Disadvantaged black students did not only demand better support and development opportunities because of the Apartheid past, but also demanded free higher education, which led to student debts of millions of rand that could also not be afforded by most HAIs of the past, e.g. the UOFS. Coping with disadvantaged students and financial stringency became major factors that, according to academics, could drastically lower academic standards at the UOFS.

It was evident that quality within the higher education context was not only a difficult concept, but also very complex, interwoven by all aspects of higher education. *Quality Assurance (QA)*, therefore, needed sustained involvement and uncompromising commitment from all South African higher education role-players and stakeholders to establish a workable *Quality Assurance System (QAS)* and culture in higher education. This commitment has been fostered by a national and institutional strategic planning approach that will now be discussed.

Strategic planning for higher education institutions (1998)

The need for a planning framework had already been identified in the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE, 1997:7): "Higher education must be planned, governed and funded as a single national co-ordinated system, in order to overcome the fragmentation, inequality and insufficiency which are the legacy of the past". In addition, the aims of planning are to ensure the following:

- The higher education system achieves the transformation objectives set out in the White Paper.
- There is coherence with regard to the provision of higher education at the national level.
- Limited resources are used efficiently and effectively.

In 1998, in response to the above-mentioned aims, the *Department of Education* (DoE) released the *National and Institutional Higher Education Planning Requirements* (NIHEPR), which outlined the framework and guidelines for implementing the system-wide and institution-based planning process as identified in the *White Paper on Higher Education Transformation* (RSA DoE, 1997). With reference to the guidelines, one of the expectations of higher education institutions was to develop and submit their institutional three-year 'rolling' plans for the first planning phase (1999-2001). These plans had to focus on the four-core national policy priorities (e.g. size and shape of the higher education system, equity, efficiency, and inter-institutional co-operation). After the submission of the three-year "rolling" plans, a report was drawn up on the plans of the Department of Education (RSA, DoE, 1999) that highlighted the fact that the second phase of planning of higher education institutions (2000-2002) would strive to develop and refine the three-year 'rolling' plans from the previous year and that the four national priorities would remain the same.

The size and shape of the higher education system in terms of size (i.e. student enrolment) and shape (i.e. student enrolment across different institutional types, fields and levels of study). The current and future size and shape of the South African higher education system directly relate to quality. In order to provide evidence for this statement mention can be made of the following:

- The decline of enrolment growth during the last two years has caused concern, given the human resource needs of this country and their effect on the sustainability of individual institutions.
- The decrease of programmes in social sciences and humanities is detrimental to career-orientated training in a vast scope of fields such as education, law, private and public sector management, social development and arts.

- Although the increase of business and commerce, science and technology programmes seems to improve necessary skills and competencies for participating in the knowledge society, favourable success rates are unlikely, given the low proficiency in mathematics and passes within the school system.

Equity in terms of the demographic composition of the student body: overall student enrolments with regard to gender equity, the level of participation of disabled students and staff/employment equity. There appears to be an indirect relationship to quality with regard to staff equity. If higher education staff and institutions are informed of the requirements of the *White Paper on Higher Education Transformation* and the provisions in the *Employment Equity Act*, they will function within a more open and transparent system. This could have a positive effect on their attitudes and morale. Student equity is an important goal in the South African policy context. It is difficult to establish a direct relationship between student equity and quality, but if the notion of quality as fitness for purpose is taken into account, the attainment of student equity in the system could be, however, an indirect indicator of quality.

Efficiency in terms of the 'internal efficiency' of the higher education system. The internal efficiency of the higher education system relates directly to quality. Therefore, an efficient system or institution is one that works well, without unnecessary duplication or waste, and within the bounds of affordability and sustainability. (e.g. Restructuring and streamlining departments and programmes that have resulted in new and innovative approaches would ensure the sustainability of a range of otherwise uneconomic programmes. Restructuring administrative operations and outsourcing non-core services such as catering, cleaning, maintenance and security would also be contributive.) Another way to improve efficiency and reduce

cost is to have clear management systems and a comprehensive debt-collection policy in place to control the level of debt (e.g. withholding results). The notion of efficiency goes beyond achieving educational goals at the lowest cost. It also involves the attainment of educational goals where efficiency measures should include the following measures to improve quality:

- decrease student dropout rates;
- enhance student success and throughput rates, including graduation rates and
- lower the input cost for teaching students and the output costs for producing successful students and graduates, in particular in relation to staff/student ratios.

Inter-institutional co-operation in terms of inter-relationship between institutions at regional level. Inter-institutional co-operation has an indirect relationship with quality. One way to illustrate this statement is to refer to the formulation of regional consortiums that are responsible for the co-ordination and management of infrastructural projects (e.g. regional application services, electronic library services, as well as the purchase and sharing of teaching and research equipment).

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned guidelines for national and institutional planning, it might be important to mention that at the moment the *Council on Higher Education* (CHE) is giving effect to its statutory responsibilities of Quality Assurance in higher education. At the same time the CHE is identifying the main challenges that face *Higher Education Quality Council* (HEQC) in the development and implementation of a new Quality Assurance framework for higher education in South Africa.

The *Higher Education Act* (RSA, 1997) and planning guidelines mean that the quality management of higher education institutions such as the UOFS is faced with the following CHE/HEQC activities. The above-mentioned Act assigned the CHE with statutory responsibility for Quality Assurance and quality promotion in higher education, to be carried out through a permanent HEQC. The HEQC is subject to the requirements of the SAQA Act. The functions of the HEQC stipulated in the Higher Education Act are:

- promote Quality Assurance (QA) in higher education;
- audit the Quality Assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions;
- accredit higher education programmes.

Quality Assurance is thus explicitly placed on centre-stage and becomes a key element to the role of the CHE in the restructuring of higher education. It is given the possibility of direct impact on South Africa's 21 universities, 15 technikons, numerous colleges and a burgeoning but as yet uncharted private higher education sector.

Against this background (see *Sections 1, 2 and 3*) the UOFS had to plan and implement quality management. Bearing the historical background, national policies and global pressures in mind, the UOFS went through two phases of quality management over the last decade (1989-1999). These phases will now be discussed as follows.

III. THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IQM AT THE UOFS

1. The First Phase of IQM based on self-evaluation (1989-1992) and inertia (1993-1995)

Introduction

How did the idea of self-evaluation come about? Several typical general reasons for set-up procedures for quality management considered in 1989 were the following:

- **Strategic (self-)evaluation:** Management of the effects of societal change on institutional programmes, services, and resources through environment scanning, monitoring and strategic planning.
- **Allocation of resources:** Improvement of institutional responsiveness to changing external conditions through resource allocation systems, which incorporated mechanisms for planning, feedback and innovation.
- **Outcome (self-) evaluation:** Collection and publication of relevant information describing institutional and student outcomes, expenditures and costs as a means of demonstrating accountability to important constituencies.
- **Image management:** Management of public opinion through (self-) evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional marketing and public relations techniques coupled with redesign of organizational communication strategies to create impact with constituencies.

Other more specific reasons were related to trends and these could not be ignored in South African higher education and equally at the UOFS since the early nineties.

- The ever-increasing need for continuing and lifelong learning linked to 'new' learning needs of disadvantaged learners and adults without previous opportunities.
- Greater diversity of cultural and economic backgrounds of students and a wide range of educational expectations and needs.
- Increasing uncertainty about the state's future involvement in, and support for, higher education due to so many other dire needs like school education, water, housing, etc.
- The global exponential expansion of the knowledge base, further compounded by technological development.

In what way could institutional quality management through self-evaluation help the UOFS deal with the above-mentioned reasons for change?

Self-evaluation was heavily emphasized during the First Phase because no national external Quality Assurance System for South African universities was in place – it was not even discussed in 1989 as part of higher education policies. External pressure on quality management was therefore non-existent, as was evident in many developed countries where external Quality Assurance Systems had already been established. As previously explained (see *Section 3*), all indications of 'faltering' academic standards were present in South African universities. This topic, however, was too sensitive politically for external Quality Assurance to even be considered amidst a revolutionary climate of harsh political change and extreme differences between advantaged (mostly white) and disadvantaged (mostly black) universities.

Bearing the above situation in mind, the question was if quality management based on self-evaluation could be helpful in preparing, and in a sense confronting, the UOFS with the realities of a dawning new South Africa and global changes in higher education. Some answers were the following:

- Quality management processes based on self-evaluation were intended to help institutions and programmes strive towards excellence in a new context of political and socio-economic change.
- Quality management based on self-evaluation should result in the further incorporation into the life of the institution or programme of ongoing, useful, institutional research and self-analysis.
- Quality management processes based on self-evaluation should precede and should be the firm foundation of all planning efforts.
- Quality management based on self-evaluation processes could provide the psychological cement for 'organization development' as referred to by experts.
- Quality management based on self-evaluation could enhance institutional openness and accountability to stakeholders.

Project planning for Phase 1 from 1989 to 1992

The project in its first phase conceived institutional processes and contents that are illustrated by the following schema.

Table 3. Institutional quality management based on self-evaluation

Institutional quality management based on self-evaluation	
Processes	Contents
The context of institutional quality management/self-evaluation	The institution has clear and publicly stated goals/aims/objectives consistent with its mission and appropriate to a higher educational institution
Conducting an institutional quality management/self-evaluation process	The institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial and physical resources to accomplish its goals/aims/objectives consistent with its mission
Completing a process	The institution is accomplishing its goals/aims/objectives consistent with its mission
Consolidation of process	The institution continues to accomplish its goals/aims/objectives consistent with its mission

Project implementation

■ *Steering Committee and Workshop*

The UOFS appointed a Steering Committee with a Vice-Rector as Chair and most deans (six out of nine) decided to serve on this Steering Committee, on behalf of their faculties, the remaining three appointing senior professors to represent their institution. The

academic support service in the form of a higher education research unit provided the secretariat for the committee and organized different workshops for providing the necessary knowledge base and communication for a *percolating* 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' process of inclusive planning and implementation of quality management based on self-evaluation. The *Unit for Research into Higher Education* (URHE) at the UOFS also had to support the whole process with research perspectives and monitoring of progress with quality management. The Steering Committee chose the following broad aim for this project: "To introduce and refine quality management processes based on *self-evaluation* with specific reference to the *evaluation processes* for academic staff, departments, degrees and courses".

The UOFS decided to invite experts from the USA, the UK and within South Africa to a Workshop (April 1989) in order to comprehend the context of quality management based on self-evaluation. This initiative was taken in view of providing sufficient background, motivation and commitment for the University to embark on the road of quality management (assurance) during such difficult and uncertain times of change.

This first Workshop was to a great extent both an eye-opener and slightly shocking for many members of the Steering Committee and academics of the UOFS. Many academic leaders (approximately 40 staff members) also attended the Workshop. One of the main reasons for their reaction was the position of most universities in South Africa, like the UOFS, who were isolated from the rest of the world during Apartheid. Quality and academic standards were accepted jargon with unfortunately little substance when openly discussed. The USA, the UK and South African perspectives were provided to launch the project.

Overseas experts provided excellent background by emphasizing certain trends such as the following reported from the USA context:

- a drive for achievement and diversity within institutions of higher education – the word 'achievement' can be replaced by 'excellence';
- a renewed emphasis upon the improvement of teaching;
- the role of higher education in economic development;
- internationalization.

■ *The most important perspectives provided for the UK context were:*

- value for money expected from the universities by the state;
- accountability, an expectation increasingly formulated by the UK society;
- the impact of these on the University.

The general feeling of the UOFS was that these trends and perspectives were without doubt applicable to the South African situation, and that the UOFS should very seriously consider, at least, the following issues.

- A university that has not given corporate consideration to the questions of where it stands academically in relation to quality, spread and market performance, as well as where it wants to be in five years' time, will have less chance of success and will be in danger of drowning.
- Unless a university pays *rigorous and systematic attention* to the *quality* of its resource allocation and *monitoring* procedures, it is certain to be wasting its resources – especially the time and energies of its academic staff – and is not providing the *best value for money*.

- An elaborate assessment procedure had to be adopted by the University, mainly for self-evaluation and improvement, but with certain parts of the assessment available for external evaluation and accountability.

South African speakers at this Workshop came from the private sector, the *Human Sciences Research Council* (HSRC) and the Government of South Africa, and were very critical of South African universities. Some of the points made by these speakers were the following.

- Traditionally, higher education, and universities in particular, had stoutly resisted a claim from any source outside their own that they were accountable, because they felt that none other than *academic insiders were qualified to assess the work* of higher education institutions.
- The claim made by higher education institutions that they were accountable only to themselves because they, alone, were competent and qualified to assess their work did have a degree of validity. Once conceded, however, universities rapidly became judges in their own causes and less desirable factors entered the situation. An institution refusing accountability from outside was constantly liable to become slack. Universities throughout the ages – and their history are quite long – give some very spectacular examples of becoming slack, almost to the extent of completely ceasing their function.
- There was a relative decline in the number of students graduating in science and engineering; universities did not attract brilliant young scientists as lecturers; and both lecturer and research staff were ageing. Research equipment was becoming too expensive for universities and technikons. In order to prevent research and

training of higher level person power from fragmenting, universities and technikons would have to rationalize, post-graduate study would have to be stimulated, not all departments would be able to provide training at doctorate levels, research priorities would have to be identified and more interdisciplinary research concentrated on in specific research programmes.

- It was almost unanimously echoed that we dared not allow the rapid increase in demand for higher education studies and constrained financial provision for higher education to prevent us from maintaining high academic standards. On the contrary, these conditions should provide the necessary stimulus for a concerted effort – not only to maintain standards, but also *to improve* them.

After these inputs, the *Academic Steering Committee* (ASC) and participating staff of the UOFS discussed the following two questions during the workshop.

Question 1: How do the different presentations relate to institutional quality management, based on self-evaluation, in a university like the UOFS in South African higher education?

Answers provided by participants

It was felt necessary to formulate the reasons for existence of the UOFS in the form of a mission statement.

- Excellence was a relative concept as far as community, mission and circumstances were concerned and should be clearly defined.
- Self-evaluation should ideally start with institutional audit and then move to the programme assessment level.
- Accountability was recognized as being a matter of importance.

- Less student contact time was perceived to be inevitable - residential students would decline in numbers, while teaching by correspondence would expand.
- It was accepted that the following issues would have to be addressed by means of institutional self-evaluation:
 - quality of staff;
 - student admissions;
 - efficiency;
 - programme quality;
 - adequate support systems.
- Clarity on matters such as language and religion, specialist v. generalist training, equal opportunities v. equal representation of different groups, etc. were essential aspects of self-evaluation.

The various presentations sensitized group members to different aspects of self-evaluation

- Uncertainty prevailed as to who should initiate the process of self-evaluation.
- The overseas models of self-evaluation were perceived by some as frightening. A South African model along the same lines might not be cost-effective. Self-evaluation in the Southern African context should be pitched within the scope allowed by our resources. Too much formality should be avoided. The challenge was to draw whatever we could from overseas experience, and develop our own system in a participative manner, meeting the basic criteria for sound evaluation.
- The necessary infrastructure would have to be created at the UOFS.

- The UOFS and all universities should start implementing self-evaluation of their own accord in order to prevent excessive state intervention.
- The problem of diversity v. standards and excellence was a serious one in South Africa, given the fact that 'minority' in the USA implied the same thing as 'majority' in South Africa. Diversity should not be over-emphasized at the cost of academic standards.
- Bridging programmes and other support services were necessary to help under-prepared students.
- It was agreed that this kind of evaluation could be feared and resisted and considered a threat to academic freedom, while weaknesses would generally be hidden and not exposed and tackled. Outside pressure might be needed to get institutional quality management started.

Some questions raised

- Should universities be made accountable to the private sector?
- What would be the responsibility of universities with respect to 'outside-driven' policies?
- Would accountability pressures jeopardize academic autonomy?
- Would diversity in South African universities lead to political tension?
- A major culture shift was to be expected at white universities. This would undoubtedly have an effect on standards and thus on accountability.

Question 2: If we assumed that institutional self-evaluation was a necessity for the UOFS, what would be the problems and needs foreseen by the UOFS?

Problems identified by participants

- Selling self-evaluation to the top structure.
- Lack of management skills and expertise.
- Lack of a sound scientific basis.
- The formulation of objective and flexible criteria.
- Lack of 'ownership' concerning mission and goal statements.
- Lack of inter-institutional co-operation.
- To whom will self-evaluation results be made available?

Needs identified by participants

- The right climate for change.
- A clarification of mission and goals.
- Infrastructure for design and implementation of self-evaluation.
- Development of an implementation strategy.
- A simple but sound system to start the process.
- Expertise for conducting the process.
- Orientation and training of academic staff.
- Development of a general, non-prescriptive framework for evaluation.
- A management/information system.
- Resources (finance, staff, time, administrative support, database, etc.).
- Clear policy statements on the University's reward system.
- A national external Quality Assurance System.

The Steering Committee felt that these problems and needs should be addressed in this project over the next three years (1989-1992).

At the conclusion of the project, we should refer to these problems and verify that they have been dealt with and solved.

Summary of what has been accomplished so far on institutional quality management based on self-evaluation

- The Steering Committee of the UOFS started the project by discussing trends and challenges in higher education in Southern Africa, and the necessity of institutional quality management based on self-evaluation.
- The Committee then dealt with the meaning and scope of institutional quality management, based on self-evaluation, by means of pre-workshop reading material, as well as through the presentations of overseas experts, namely Professors Stetar and Turner. The South Africans who contributed were Mr O'Dowd, Professor Smit and Mr de Klerk.
- A group discussion on the above inputs allowed for discussion on two basic questions (see *Questions 1 and 2 above*).

The Rectorate and Steering Committee agreed that the next activity should be to formulate a mission for the University that could then lead to a process of strategic planning, including quality management based on institutional self-evaluation.

❖ ***Mission formulation of the UOFS***

It was quite clear that up to, and including the sixties, before the period of political unrest in South Africa really began, universities in Southern Africa, for example, functioned in a stable environment. The unwritten mission of universities was understood and generally accepted to provide general-formative education for a fairly selected group of students, and training for access to the so-called 'high'

professions. Even when the curriculum was extended to accommodate developments in scientific and technological fields, the University goal to be achieved was still quite clear (Caruthers and Lott, 1981; Kerr, 1987: 183; *Department of National Education (NATED)* 02/129, 1987; Kohler 1985).

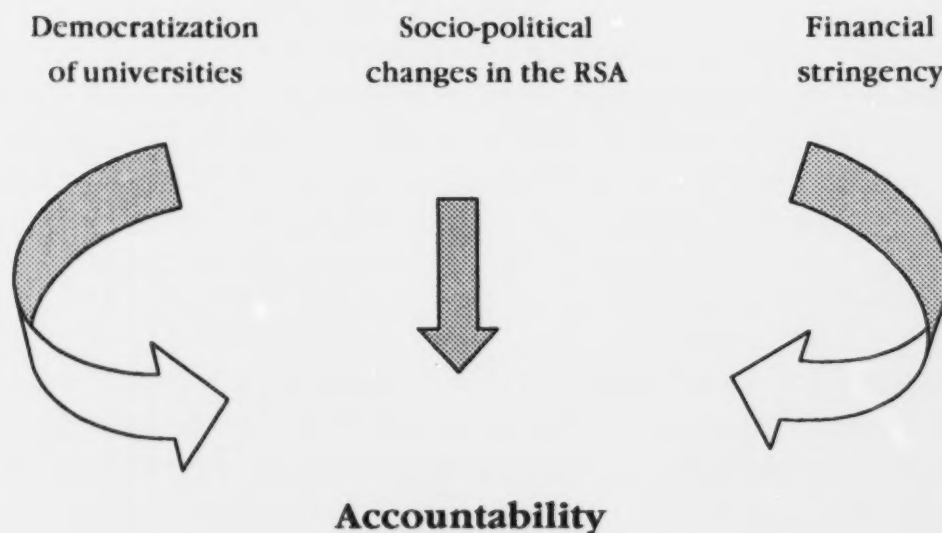
Du Toit (1988:1) refers to the University at that time as the 'traditional'. Matters such as freedom and autonomy (Immanuel Kanto's *Der Streit der Fakultäten* in the 18th century), the unity of the University and the sciences (Schelling's *Vorlesung über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*), the system and grounds of the University (Hegel and Fichte) and so forth, had occasional preference. Du Toit (1988:3) further indicates that the 'traditional' University strongly supported the principle of autonomous 'reason'.

After the sixties and, as already illustrated above, especially throughout the late eighties and early nineties, drastic change of higher education in South Africa was inevitable.

Apart from external factors that compelled higher education institutions to carefully scrutinize their 'unwritten' missions in particular, certain internal influences also persuaded them to publicly announce their mission for a 'new' South Africa. According to Kohler (1985:346) effectiveness and efficiency were in demand everywhere, especially in times of change. A mission, as the directive element for contextual-strategic planning and management, was revived in this regard in particular and was also necessary in dealing with changing external factors, as well as with internal pressure for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Figure 1 indicates some of the most important factors that compelled higher education institutions in South Africa to compile mission statements.

Figure 1. Important factors compelling higher education to compile mission statements



The UOFS was without a mission statement, up to this point in time, and it was only then realized that should be emphasized the directive value of a mission for planning and management.

Figure 2. Mission formulation and planning

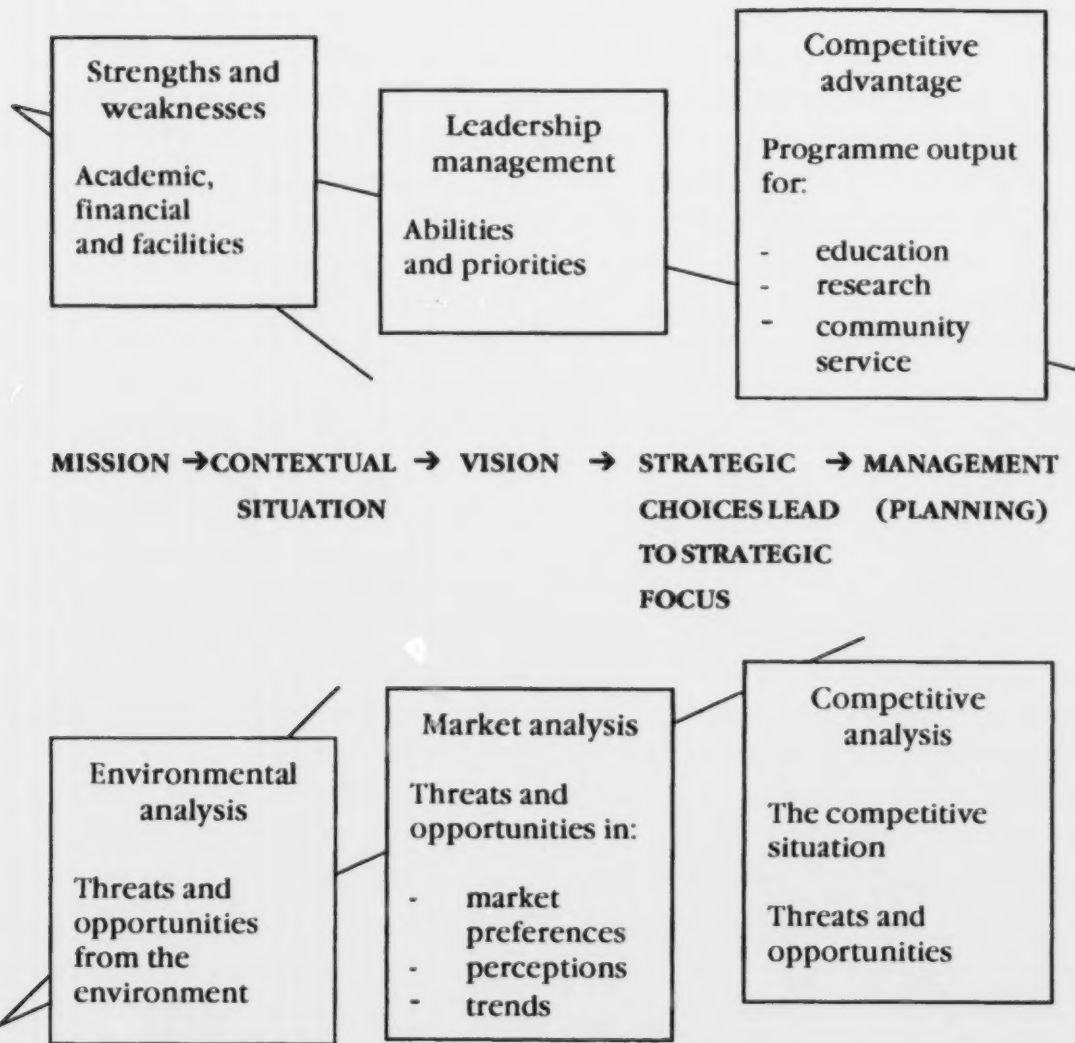
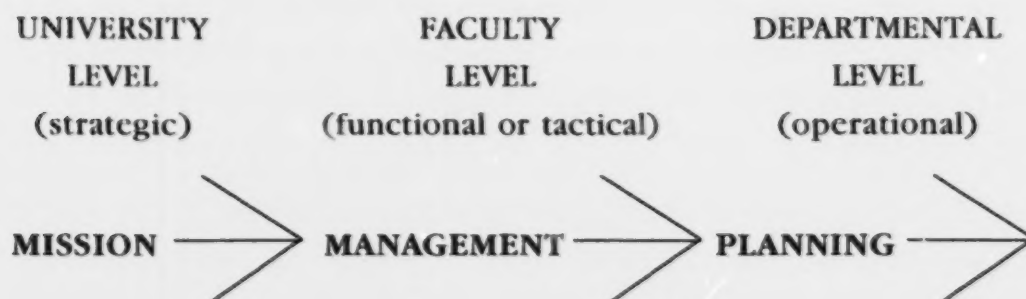


Figure 2 is an illustration of the process that was adopted at the UOFS and shows both relation and connection between mission and planning, as the first important components of meaningful planning. In this diagrammatical representation, the directive meaning of the mission for the University's strategic managerial level is, in particular, emphasized. It is also of outmost importance, however, to take note of the continuing direction and focus that the mission provided for functional-tactical management at faculty/school level, as well as for

operational management at departmental level. Influence was thus exercised by the University mission with its directive meaning for planning/management at faculty, school and departmental level, as illustrated in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3. The mission as a directive for planning (management) at all levels



This preparatory work led to the following mission statement for the UOFS (Strydom, 1989:63):

"This university, in accordance with its Statutes and Regulations, acknowledges the sovereign authority and guidance of God and therefore it is:

- "a *Christian university*, because of the nature of its history and development;
- an *Afrikaans university* with basic cultural principles, true to its national identity and aim to provide for spiritual, cultural and other needs of the section of the population, that it serves, according to its character and traditions".

■ *The nature of the University*

The University, as an academic institution, functioned in the midst of, in cohesion and interactively with other community institutions, but in accordance with its distinctive fundamental principles and nature. The core activities of the University were the following:

- scientific education, emphasizing academic and vocational studies;
- scientific research, and
- community services.

Arising from these fundamental assignments, closely related thereto, and within the framework of education, research and community services, the University was also:

- co-responsible for the development of its students into mature individuals, capable of meaningful contributions to and participation in a differentiated community.

With regard to each of the components identified above, the University took into consideration influences coming from the external environment, such as social expectations, economic and demographic trends and state planning, as well as internal suppositions and restrictions.

■ *The aims of the University*

The first and most important aim was the *exploitation of the University as a centre of academic excellence* by:

- creating optimum conditions for both achievement and practice of skills, knowledge and insight;
- developing necessary intellectual faculties for analytical, critical and evaluative creative thought, as well as for synthesis and stimulation of independent assessment of scientific data;
- applying science within a professional context in view of training highly qualified persons capable of fulfilling their tasks with distinction.

Secondly, the University strove to maintain *the highest possible academic standards*, both on graduate and post-graduate levels. Special emphasis was placed on the post-graduate aspect, taking into account the requirements for scientific application that characterizes the accumulation of knowledge. This included:

- accumulation, control, systematization and extension of knowledge by in-depth research, and thus
- exposure of deeper meaning for the purpose of the continuous exploitation of the corpus of science.

Thirdly, in accordance with the above-mentioned aims and within the framework of the academic system, *the University would always endeavour* to ensure that:

- individual quality was developed to the utmost;
- the individual was not lost in the masses;
- the ideal would always be to produce balanced scientists, prepared for leadership in the community as also
- a complete person was developed, equipped to play a full and equal role in the community.

The Mission Statement was accepted by majority vote in the Senate and Council of the UOFS during 1989. The issue of quality and academic standards was addressed and opportunities were created to continue with a process of quality management. The Mission Statement, however, was not well accepted politically by the democratic movement in the Free State with the result that it led to conflict and great uncertainty concerning the university's future in the new dispensation that was announced in South Africa in 1990 and fulfilled in 1994.

■ *Planning and quality management*

In uncertain and very unstable political circumstances the Steering Committee on quality management (assurance) at the UOFS supported the process of strategic planning (management) at the UOFS.

There was no doubt in the minds of both Steering Committee members and the UOFS rectorate that the 'maintenance of quality' as related to academic standards and Quality Assurance, was one of the most important challenges facing higher education in South Africa and in most other countries worldwide.

The ideal of self-regulation has many attributes, but self-assessment, self-study and/or self-evaluation were regarded as cornerstones to internal and external Quality Assurance processes. Both research results and development work in scope, concept, procedures and context of self-evaluation indicate that there was still much to be done before an effective self-regulation system, including internal Quality Assurance through self-evaluation, could be established for all sectors of higher education in South Africa. Subsequently, the UOFS approach was meant to encourage the inception of a process of Quality Assurance in a meaningful and acceptable way in order not to jeopardize future developments related to the maintenance and enhancement of quality in higher education.

On the basis of completed research, development work on leadership and management¹, as well as on self-evaluation, it was

1. This research was done with a view to preparing a framework for strategic management for the project on leadership and management in higher education, conducted by the *Unit for Research into Higher Education* (URHE). The first phase of the leadership and management project (1985-1987), as well as a research project on the same theme (1986-1988), served as valuable sources of knowledge and experience for compiling a management framework.

possible to construct a strategic management model for purposes of internal quality management and Quality Assurance² (see *Figure 4*).

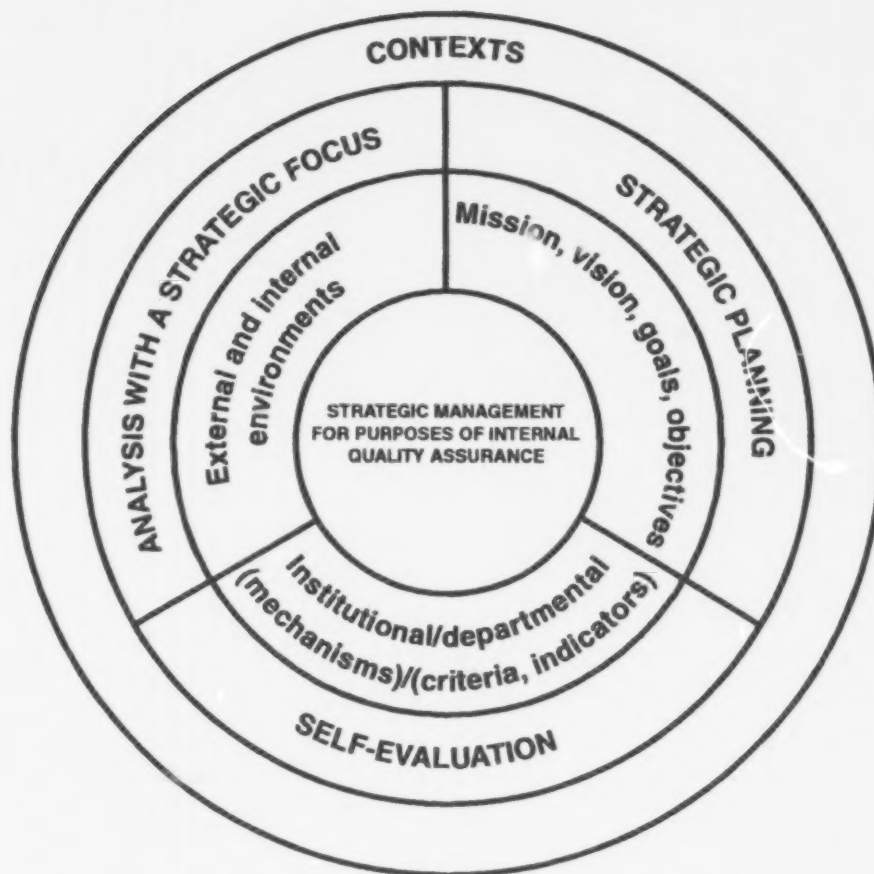
This model did not take into account all areas and levels at the UOFS. Rather, it represented a strategic approach with the emphasis on strategic management as a process, comprising three important sub-processes, namely:

- (i) analysis with a strategic focus;
- (ii) strategic planning;
- (iii) self-evaluation (evaluation of strategic management mechanisms, procedures, goals/aims and objectives at institutional and departmental levels).

These components, considered in relation to different contexts, are described, and then integrated at institutional and departmental levels, are outlined as follows:

2. This model for strategic management can also be used for purposes of enrolment management, facilities management, financial management, etc.

Figure 4. A model for strategic quality management



(i) Analysis with a strategic focus

Analysis with a strategic focus is of vital importance in management, regardless of the level at which the management process is situated.

A systematic analysis includes the internal – institutional – as well as the external environment. An analysis should be directed by the mission (a central, continuous, striving and educational philosophy) of the institution. The mission of a faculty/school or department should ideally be in line with that of the institution. Internal analysis should attend to such aspects as the strengths and weaknesses of the

institution, the role of leadership and management, and the competitive advantage per department/programme. The external analysis should consider opportunities and threats in the environment, and include both a market and competitors analysis.

(ii) Strategic planning

The distinction among definitions, characteristics and the role of different types of planning is important. Strategic planning, for example, involves major strategic decisions (or issues) of an institution and has to meet certain criteria. These criteria include the relationship between the institution and its external environment, as well as its involvement as a whole in decision-making.

By contrast, institutional planning processes are linked to specific timetables and are undertaken according to fixed cycles. These processes include long-term, tactical and operational types of planning.

Strategic planning is performed according to an irregular timeframe as and when strategic challenges emerge. Strategic planning has grown in popularity in higher education since academic leaders seem to have adopted a more proactive, external orientation.

Strategic planning is externally directed, it focuses on 'what' the organization should do, deals with 'macro-' issues, spans organizational boundaries, is a continuing process dictated by changes in environment that occur within an irregular timeframe, deals with relatively high levels of uncertainty, and values expert judgement. Organizational or institutional planning is internally focused and emphasizes 'how' to do the 'what' stipulated by strategic planning. It deals with the impact of 'macro-' on 'micro-' issues, is tied to organizational units and the process of budget/resource

allocations, is relatively certain – or at least depends on the appearance of certainty – and is highly participatory and constituency-based. Consequently, a critical element to be understood is how to link strategic planning activities to traditional, organizational planning activities. It is often necessary to craft an entirely different planning process and structure in order to deal with strategic planning, but it remains crucial for it to be linked to existing processes and structures for organizational planning.

There is no single tool or methodology for linking strategic to other types of planning. A combination of the following elements, however, would be favourable to its success:

- Environmental analyses to search for emerging trends and challenges that require changes in strategy;
- Sound management procedures at all levels to translate ‘macro’ changes into impacts on “micro-”components of tactical and operational planning;
- Willingness and co-operation to modify established plans and procedures as new strategies emerge.

(iii) Self-evaluation

The evaluation of the process of strategy formulation and implementation should be well planned. An evaluation plan should be explicitly stated, which means purposeful planning in respect of what is being evaluated, evaluation criteria and indicators, standards of achievement, the way in which evaluation is proceeded to, the period during which evaluation will take place and those who are responsible. Evaluation plans should be adaptable and allow for various approaches. These plans should be attuned to the evaluation

of specific goals and objectives. As many participants as possible should utilize management information which is recent. The plans should be of adequate scope and depth to evaluate accountability; they should focus on the outcomes or results of goals and objectives and should stimulate a process of self-evaluation.

The UOFS self-evaluation, however, according to this model, was not seen at this stage as a kind of management process on its own, but rather regarded as part of strategic planning and management.

Furthermore, the evaluation process was as important as its results. Not only the outcome, but both 'how' and 'what' was being evaluated. The evaluation process should also utilize 'objective' or 'hard' data where available and adequate. However, the use of 'subjective' or 'soft' data in which perception, interpretation and similar factors played a role, was not less important. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation, therefore, were complementary.

Conclusions and recommendations ensuing from the evaluation process should be action-orientated: in other words, they should contain plans that make their implementation possible. To evaluate specific goals/objectives as 'weak' or 'unsatisfactory' would be insufficient. Recommendations for adaptations/change/improvements were essential.

(iv) Context

The term 'context' could be used in different ways. It could first of all be used in a restricted sense to describe the 'structure and direction' of an institution as an entity. Every higher education institution has a specific context that cannot be disregarded. However, since strategic approaches mainly focus on the external environment, it appears that such a focus – in general on the past –

did result, disregard this unique structure or of the direction of higher education institutions.

The idea of context, however, was not solely applicable to what has now been termed as the 'structure and direction' of the institution: it is also attributed to its immediate social environment, which could be called the extended sense of context.

Both restricted and extended contexts were always embedded within yet another perhaps adequately termed as the meta-context. This overarching context of higher education planning concerns two separate, but interconnected frameworks: internal images that govern higher education goals and ideological value systems that are operative in modern societies and systems that surround the institution and its planners.

(v) Integrating the model at institutional and departmental levels

At the UOFS it was regarded as realistic to strive to obtain the following at the institutional level.

- (a) Consider and review institutional mechanisms for applying and promoting strategic management for purposes of internal *Quality Assurance (QA)* through self-evaluation.
- (b) Comment on the extent to which procedures are in place in every institution so that quality can be promoted and assured in practice through benchmark standards.

This would implicate that the UOFS should first scrutinize mechanisms and procedures that are in place for analysis, planning of self-evaluation and meta-contextual thinking as described in the proposed strategic management model. Secondly, the UOFS should closely examine mechanisms and procedures at the institutional level,

in the provision for and design of such areas as academic programmes, teaching, learning and communication, staff, external examiners and reports, students' views on programmes of study and provision for student services, as well as external views, such as accrediting bodies and employers.

At the departmental level a more detailed approach would be necessary. A questionnaire format seemed to be a meaningful and positive procedure, in that it served as a source of ideas and provided a conceptual framework for evaluation.

In such a questionnaire, details of the kind of information to be utilized could be arranged under the following headings:

Section A: Analysis.

Section B: Planning (goal formulation).

Section C: Evaluation (gathering of data: departmental activities).

(vi) Practical issues

The mission formulation and strategic quality management models were examples of progress with quality management processes in 'theory', but practically on the operational level the Steering Committee was still struggling with the following questions:

- How can the top structure be motivated and persuaded to lead and finance *Institutional Quality Management* (IQM)?
- How can academic staff be motivated to support IQM?
- How does IQM relate to accreditation of degrees and courses by professional bodies?
- IQM based on self-evaluation and rationalization being different processes going on at the same time, poses problems. How do we deal with that?

- Where should the expertise to conduct IQM processes come from? How should people be prepared/trained for their role?

Neither the Steering Committee nor the University ever properly dealt with these questions. An acute answer implicated staff, time, funds and facilities that were just not available at a period when higher education subsidy cuts by the state of 2-3 per cent were experienced annually, when expectations of disadvantaged communities were growing, and political turmoil was leading to greater uncertainty, only to further inhibit change.

The practical application of the strategic management model would at least be illustrated by using examples of goal formulation at institutional and departmental levels.

As suggested, the Steering Committee attempted involving the operational level of the UOFS through its departments. It was decided to solicit their help in providing criteria and indicators for assessment of strategic areas of staff appraisal, programmes and departments.

How did one establish appropriate criteria/indicators? How did one choose and accumulate essential and relevant information? What tests did one apply? Various possibilities existed according to which criteria or indicators for purposes of evaluation could be compiled.

Once again, the questionnaire format proved to be efficient. Not only were criteria and indicators established for staff-appraisal programmes and departmental assessment through these questionnaires, but also departments were asked to volunteer to implement these different forms of quality management. They proceeded to do this under their deans' leadership, who would then present the evaluative process results to the Rectorate. In this way it would become part of the strategic planning of the UOFS.

Out of 120 departments of the different faculties, approximately 20 responded to the challenges that originated from this exercise by way of the following initiatives:

- Experimentation with more cost-effective courses and teaching practices such as open learning, distance teaching, self-study, etc.;
- Intra- and inter-institutional co-operation, i.e. relaxation of established departmental and racist boundaries;
- Acceptance of market/consumer pressure as an incentive for the evolution of a new, yet undefined, tertiary education system; acceptance of the inevitable flexibility demanded by such a system, without compromising basic academic principles;
- Entering into partnership with industrial, commercial and agricultural sectors ('service-based' relationships);
- Planning bridging courses, especially in those subject areas where the dropout figure is high and the student composition is heterogeneous;
- Regular evaluation of course content, lecturers' level of performance and students' progress;
- Effective control of staff performance by means of appraisal and reward systems.

In addition to these challenges, the top structure of the rectorate and deans decided to establish a system of departmental evaluation in a cyclic process of 3 to 5 years. The deans were asked to implement reviews of departments where academic efficiency and cost-effectiveness were becoming problematic, and these departments were asked to prepare a type of self-evaluation. Based on this self-

evaluation, a small committee with at least one expert professor from another university in the same subject area would be a member to do a departmental review and make recommendations on how to change and/ or strengthen such a department. At least 17 departments of different faculties were reviewed through this process, which led to rationalization in some departments and to new programme initiatives and research projects in others.

This very interesting work was neither recognized nor rewarded, however, by the university in a meaningful and systematic way: many of these important initiatives were almost taken for granted and/or politically abused by some academics with influence. Most only faded away, becoming lost opportunities to be later regretted at the UOFS in the late nineties.

The turbulent period of political change (1993-1995) leading to inertia of IQM

Many reasons – both good and bad – are at the origin of the inertia of IQM at the UOFS during this period.

A valid reason is the radical period of change due to higher education policy development that started with the *National Education Policy Investigation* (NEPI) Report (1993), the NCHE (1996), through to the *Higher Education Act* of 1997 as described in *Section 3* of this booklet. The *Education White Paper 3: A programme for higher education transformation* (1997) adopted a triple challenge as its point of departure:

- overcome social-structural inequities;
- contribute to reconstruction and development;
- position South Africa in an effective engagement with globalization.

Policy development, therefore, aimed to ensure South Africa of a better place and that it be better equipped for the challenges of the 21st Century.

Both the gravity and the enormity of the challenge became increasingly evident as it was recognized that, for various reasons, it was not an option to postpone, or to tackle in sequence one or the other elements of the triple challenge. They had to be confronted simultaneously.

As was to be noted in the White Paper:

"The South African economy is confronted with the formidable challenge of integrating itself into the competitive arena of international production and finance"

"Simultaneously, the nation is confronted with the challenge of reconstructing domestic social and economic relations to eradicate and redress the inequitable patterns of ownership, wealth and social and economic practices that were shaped by segregation and Apartheid" (emphasis added).

In relation to this many-headed challenge, the White Paper identified various, and indeed diverse social purposes for South African higher education:

- "give attention to the pressing local, regional and national needs of the South African society, and to the problems and challenges of the broader African context;
- mobilize human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society;

- help lay the foundations for a critical civil society, with a culture of public debate and tolerance which accommodates differences and competing interests;
- train and provide person power to strengthen this country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation;
- produce, acquire and apply new knowledge .../... a well-organized, vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction".

Radical change envisaged through these policies was not unique to South African higher education. The fact, however, that they were an integral part of both a political and social transition, societal reconstruction and of the development programme was too much for the leaders and most academics at the UOFS and for many other higher education institutions in South Africa (cf. CHE, 1999)

Furthermore, both strategic planning and management of the UOFS lost momentum due to tension and conflict in the institution between, on the one hand, many of the principle priorities of redress, equity, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and quality and, on the other hand, financial stringency. Quality and quality management were simply not important enough to be a major priority during this period of radical transformation.

The UOFS also discovered that 'theoretically' planning an excellent strategic quality management process was one thing, but for it to

actually occur, and for it to be financially supported, was quite another. At the heart of the matter were conflicting values and attitudes towards both the future of the UOFS in uncertain times of radical change, and the definition of what higher education should be in general, and at the UOFS in particular, in the context of a 'new' South Africa. Another problem was due to decentralizing academic planning and management to UOFS faculty without verifying that its leaders at different levels were fully aware of issues concerning the roles, relationships and/or the running of an organization, or the political struggle and/or degrees of freedom.

UOFS leaders did not verify that their management staff understood the special characteristics of universities. Staff was not necessarily aware of the very complex goals, relatively underdeveloped methods for gathering, interrelating and using data about institutional inputs, processes and outcomes, or the way in which decisions are made and/or delegated to the operational core of departments and disciplines. Leaders did not ensure that staff was trained for IQM and solving complex tasks from this process. Other characteristics of universities possibly unknown to staff were an unclear division of responsibility for strategy-setting between disciplinary units and the organization as a whole and loose coupling of organizational units often precluded timely, organization-wide responsiveness and setting-up of strategy. A basic agreement on strategy was rare, and even if the institutional strategy for IQM was clear and well articulated, the strategy of individual units was not, and also was often incompatible.

The mission of the University caused tension at the UOFS, as a result it was not making adequate provision for the sudden increase of black students enrolling in the University, who could not be

reconciled with the typical white, Afrikaans perspectives (see *Section 2* and *Section 3*).

At this time, a strong process of decentralization of academic and financial management towards faculties (e.g. deans and heads of departments) took place at the UOFS in order to be in line with the world-wide tendency of decentralization in higher education and improved financial planning and use of resources. This arrangement was also made to make provision for accommodating divergent perspectives on the new South Africa and the academy within it. Because of the decentralization of transformation to UOFS faculties, the central leadership of the University had lost political power, and was in many ways no longer in touch with the unstable and chaotic conditions of higher education aspirations and need.

Concluding remarks

Reference has been made in **Phase 1** (see *Section 4*) to the four-year project planning (1989 to 1992). According to the analysis, it was quite clear that the four years were entirely dedicated to the IQM context to support the UOFS in preparing clear and publicly-stated purposes, goals and objectives in different areas and at different levels of the institution, which is consistent with its first mission statement.

The process of IQM was not conducted, completed or consolidated as had been originally envisaged for the first four years, due to different causes of inertia (see *Section 4*).

The above-mentioned inertia prevented both the planning, and especially the implementation, of quality management as a system and its being conducted in an ordered and structured way by the University, taking into account the needs of human resources and infrastructure. The result was that certain enthusiastic and committed

deans and heads of departments introduced various forms of quality management such as departmental evaluation, staff appraisal and especially student assessment of staff, programmes and courses. Excellent work was accomplished, but due to the fact that there was no quality management system in place, little recognition was given to this difficult and hard effort for quality at the different levels of planning and management. In the course of time the motivation for hard work in quality management decreased, and even disappeared. Certain faculties, via their connection with professional boards, experienced increasing pressure to keep up with external evaluation demands and to connect with external *Quality Assurance* (QA) expectations in the workplace. The state also demanded accountability of the system in the form of the *South African Post-Secondary Education* (SAPSE) system that also made high demands with regard to the management information, but was not directly related to institutional management. During this period the UOFS, in particular, became a parallel medium institution, and demands in this regard placed tremendous pressure on academics because the work related to teaching doubled, and the bridging and tutorial instruction was extended to accommodate both expectations, and needs, of the increasing number of disadvantaged students, at the UOFS. Lastly, the problem of enormous financial pressure did not only increase due to subsidy cuts and less donor funds for typical research (donor funds were increasingly channelled towards bridging and support) but also due to the fact that black students were unable or unwilling to pay class fees because of poverty and political expectations and promises. All of the above-mentioned reasons led to inertia in quality management until 1996, when the higher education policy of the new democratic government stipulated the necessity of *Quality Assurance* (QA) for purposes of improvement and accountability.

2. The Second Phase of IQM at the UOFS based on national policies and global pressures (1996-1999)

The Second Phase of quality management at the UOFS was based on national policies and global pressure for *Quality Assurance* (QA) in higher education.

The UOFS, as already described above, had unfortunately lost the momentum that had been built up in the First Phase. The Second Phase was tackled with new academics in the Rectorate, mostly new deans of faculties, the number of which had been decreased from a total of nine to seven. It also began with a completely new dispensation of multi- and inter-disciplinary academic programmes that had been established across the boundaries of typical faculties and disciplines. National policies on higher education and Quality Assurance had naturally led to replanning quality management via a newly appointed Quality Assurance Committee with the following purposes:

- improve the UOFS and its programmes;
- assure the public with regard to the achievement of the required general level of quality;
- assure important public stakeholders that a particular set of professional and academic standards had been achieved;
- demonstrate both effectiveness and provision of accountability, whether or not UOFS and programme purposes and intentions are fulfilled at a satisfactory level;
- demonstrate or effect efficiency in every function of quality management at all levels of the UOFS;
- permit choices of programmes in respect of funding from the state and donors;

- rationalize decisions to be made in the system at regional and institutional levels.

The purposes of IQM at the UOFS also directly relate to other higher education issues such as governance (state regulation), funding, future needs, planning, a qualification framework, access, articulation (recognition of prior learning) and a management information system.

It is also essential that the Quality Assurance structure, mechanisms and procedures correspond to the purpose. A *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) has in general multiple purposes and, while there are practical limits to the means for its accommodation and funding, structures, mechanisms and procedures should achieve a match between purpose and means. It was felt that the purpose of the 'ideal' *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) should be phased over a five-year period at the UOFS. The reason for this long phase-in period is not only due to academic and political factors, but also to the lack of expertise (capacity building) in quality management and to the financial implications for the UOFS.

With regard to Quality Assurance mechanisms and procedures, the UOFS model should have three approaches integrated into one system for the purpose of Quality Assurance:

1. Institutional auditing for purposes of quality improvement and enhancement by using institutional self-evaluation, and independent review processes, at institutional level.
2. Programme accreditation, because SAQA, through the HEQC of the CHE, professional boards and *Sectorial Education Training Authorities* (SETAs) would expect programme self-evaluation for their purpose of external programme assessment.

3. Quality promotion through research and development work. The establishment of the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC), consisting of representatives of all faculties and experts of the UOFS, was responsible for collecting, interpreting and disseminating information on matters of quality and Quality Assurance related to the *National Qualitative Framework* (NQF) and SAQA. It could also be responsible for making institutional research available to all relevant stakeholders.

It was also vital that this quality management process be a cyclic process, gaining progressively in effectiveness, and being integrated into the domains of institutional planning and budgeting.

In practice, quality management would function at three levels, namely the macro-, meso- and micro-levels. The micro-level contained both the institutional audits and programme accreditation of *Quality Assurance* (QA). The meso-level would feature the role of bodies such as Quality Assurance agencies of the HEQC of the CHE. The macro-level represented the national policy environment that would manage the national system for higher education in South Africa.

Figure 5 illustrates the typical process of strategic planning and management with specific reference to quality management (Quality Assurance), as well as typical basic components of planning, implementation, evaluation, revision and improvement. To complete this cyclic process with more details of the planning process, the implementation and evaluation, as well as the reviewing, reporting and improvement processes are described in a broad detailed way. This detailed process uses division and mission statements, typical functions of a higher education institution such as education, research and community service, policies, strategies, action plans and budgets to describe the planning process.

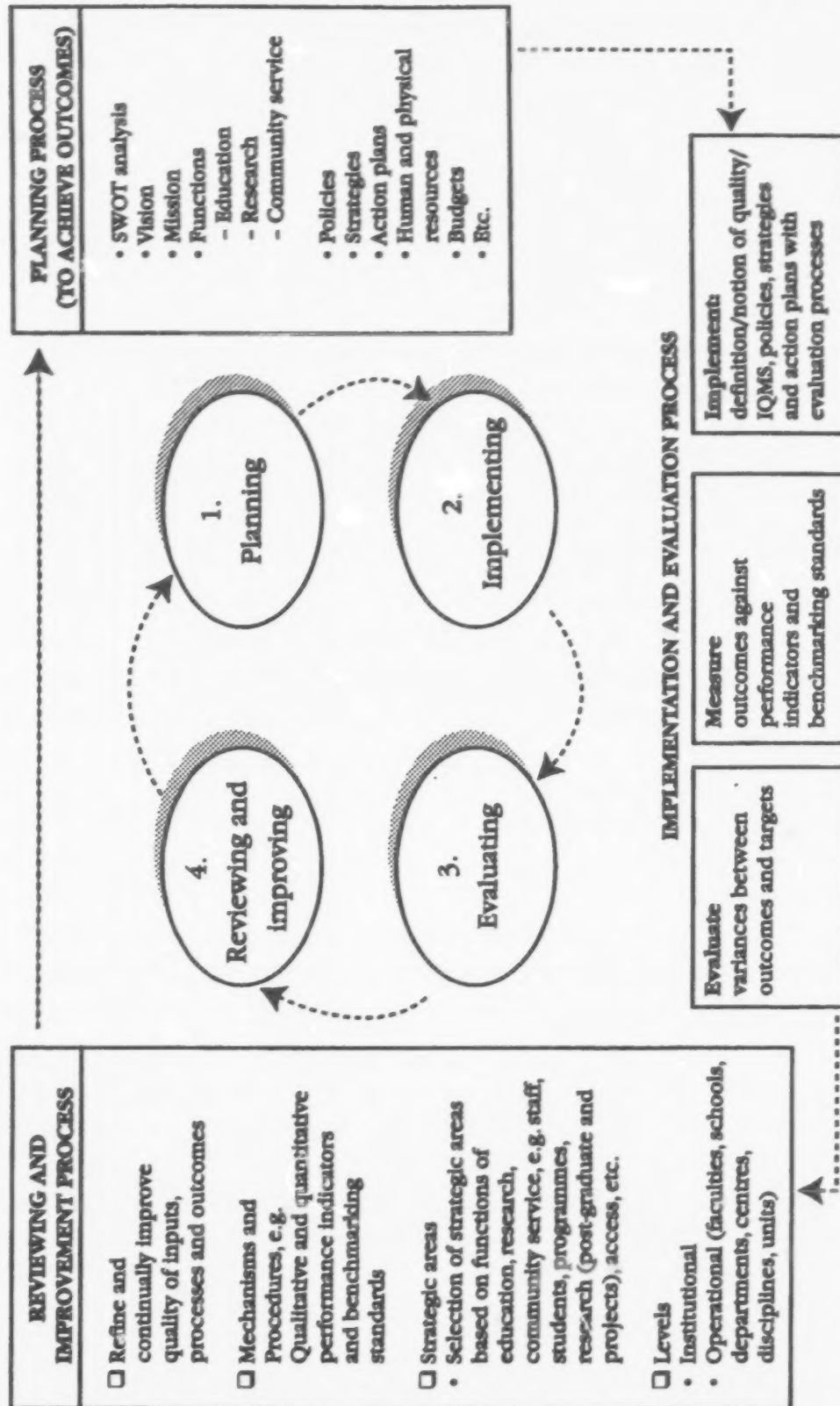
The implementation and evaluation process is filled in with implementation strategies; evaluation measures where outcomes are assessed against criteria, indicators, benchmarks and final evaluations indicating variances between outcomes and targets.

The final reporting, reviewing and improvement processes are conducted by looking at levels, critical areas, mechanisms and procedures to be able to make changes (improvement) to the future planning of the institution. The following actions could be part of these processes:

- identify cross-institutional priorities for actions to be undertaken during the following year;
- report to stakeholders with regard to the quality of education, research and community service provided by the institution and how it could be improved;
- inform future operational and strategic planning;
- inform staff development planning;
- provide feedback to all staff (see *Figure 5*).

Once all levels of the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) had agreed to use the explanation in *Figure 5* as the basis of strategic quality management, two questionnaires were implemented to make decisions on specific details of an institutional and operational quality management system at the UOFS.

Figure 5. Strategic planning (management) with specific reference to quality management (assurance)



■ *First questionnaire: heads of departments*

The *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) of the UOFS decided to compile questionnaires for heads of departments in order to facilitate the 'bottom-up' self-evaluation process. These questionnaires had a threefold purpose:

- **Questionnaire A:** To determine if a planning procedure existed within the department as well as whether this procedure was in line with the broader vision/mission/policy/objectives/goals/strategies of the university.
- **Questionnaires B, C, D:** To identify the Quality Assurance procedures and mechanisms within the department as well as to determine the degree of importance of these Quality Assurance mechanisms and procedures.
- **Questionnaire E:** To clarify which Quality Assurance mechanisms and procedures are regarded as the most important by the heads of departments.

These questionnaires served as a situation analysis instrument of the University of the Orange Free State's *Quality Assurance System* (QAS). The value of such a situation analysis was to identify gaps in the UOFS *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) and to determine priorities with regard to *Quality Assurance* (QA). This action as a 'bottom-up' approach could also ensure commitment to, and understanding of, quality management. Following this attempt, the UOFS started addressing the eventual aim of *Quality Assurance* (QA) in South Africa, namely to move towards a model of self-regulation by higher education institutions and validation by the HEQC, including peers. Clearly, self-regulation would require institutions to develop greater self-evaluation capacity. In addition, Van Bruggen, Scheele and Westerheijden (1998) maintain that self-evaluation is the first and most

important element to support improvement. Consequently, a strategic focus on self-evaluation as the basis of a quality management system was vital.

The results of the first questionnaire were analyzed in great detail for department heads for their specific departments, deans of faculties for their specific faculties and an executive summary for the executive management of the university as a whole. The results of the executive summary of this questionnaire are included (see *Appendix 1*). This questionnaire was without doubt very successful in stimulating and opening debate on quality management at institutional and operational levels at the UOFS. It also proved the point that, although the UOFS had established different *Quality Assurance* (QA) mechanisms and procedures with more or less success over a period of time, there were major 'quality gaps' in these existing *Quality Assurance* (QA) mechanisms and procedures. It also emphasized the fact that these mechanisms and procedures were not at all functioning as a part of a strategic quality management system, based on reliable and valid quality management information.

All important recommendations, and results, from this questionnaire are currently being incorporated into the planning of the quality management system of the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS).

■ *The second questionnaire: on a system of IQM at the UOFS*

The purpose of the second questionnaire (see *Appendix 2*) was to encourage the executive management UOFS officials – rectors, deans and directors – to reflect top-down on the following domains as far as the teaching and learning functions of the UOFS were concerned:

- Notion(s) of quality;
- Notion(s) of self-evaluation;
- Process of self-evaluation (Quality Assurance);
- Cost of self-evaluation (Quality Assurance);
- External and internal influences on self-evaluation (Quality Assurance).

UOFS officials were asked to reflect on the extent to which each item was applicable to the UOFS, and the degree of importance the UOFS attached to the item concerned, at that point in time, against the background of their present knowledge and experience. The state of affairs with regard to self-evaluation and Quality Assurance of the teaching/learning function at the UOFS at that point in time was also to be closely considered.

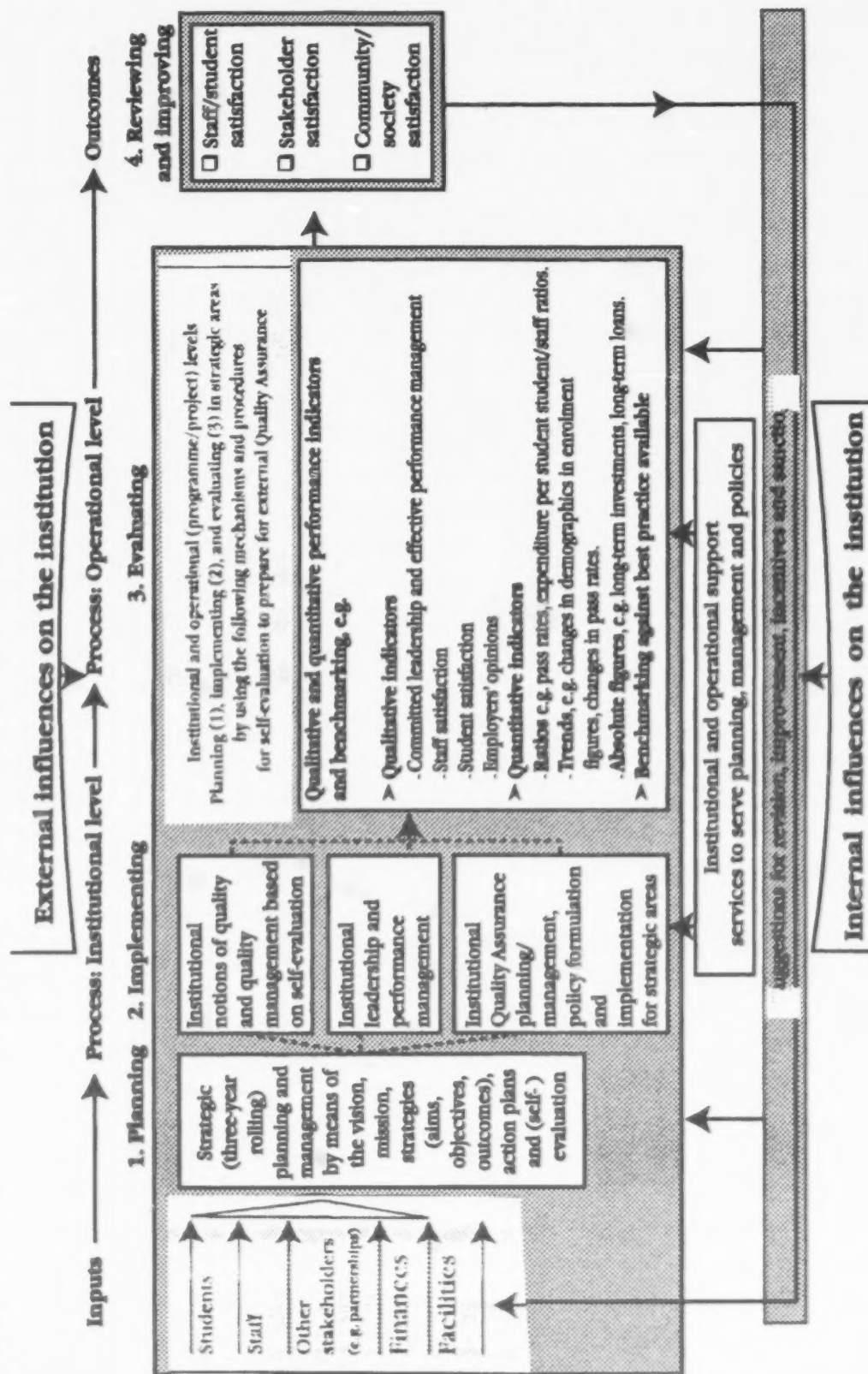
This questionnaire was sent to 30 members of the Executive Management of the university and only a disappointing 40 per cent response was received. The reasons given by the members of the *Executive Management Committee* for not completing the questionnaire were also interesting, because they varied. Some, for example, stated that they found it very difficult to complete the questionnaire, because they believed that they did not, neither have enough expertise in the areas of quality nor receive enough information support from the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) to complete the questionnaire. It was obvious that such a weak response to the questionnaire could not lead to reliable and valid results. The Executive Management decided, in consequence, to hold a three-hour workshop in October 1999 in view of discussing the 40 per cent response and to add comments to the questionnaire. The workshop was intended to furnish the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) with enough available information for planning the details of

an institutional and operational quality management system for the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS).

Based on the above-mentioned information (see *Figure 5*) and questionnaires, as well as on the new national policy implementation in the area of *Quality Assurance* (QA), the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) did the detailed planning, with the Executive Management and staff at all levels of the UOFS, to ensure clear communication on both the process and system for quality management. *Figure 6* describes the institutional quality management framework. This figure is self-explanatory and can be interpreted without providing a detailed description.

It suffices to mention that the four basic components of planning, implementation, evaluation, revising/improving of *Figure 5* are now filled in with details of institutional and operational quality management as outlined in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6. Institutional quality management framework



It can be deduced from the institutional quality management framework (*Figure 6*), that the operational quality management frameworks are derived from strategic areas such as programme assessment, staff appraisal, financial audit, access and enrolment assessments, research evaluation, etc. It is important to mention that these operational quality frameworks are negotiated with different portfolio committees comprising experts who will negotiate these operational quality processes with all relevant stakeholders at all different levels both inside and outside the institution to ensure a relevant approach to strategic quality areas. See *Appendix 3* which is an example of how certain criteria for programme quality assessment were shared with the *Programme Planning Committee* (PPC). The *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) is now waiting for this Committee's critical analysis, and views, on which criteria and indicators should be used for programme assessment at the UOFS. The institutional quality management system will be finalized by deducting the most important criteria and indicators from the different strategic operational areas into an institutional quality management system – to ensure relevance, but also realism about the size and financial sustainability of the institutional and operational quality management systems.

It is quite clear from **Phase 2** (see *Section 4*) that the UOFS is still primarily dealing with the context of IQM, rather than with conducting, completing and consolidating an IQM process and system (as described in *Section 4*). At the moment, UOFS is unsystematically continuing with *ad hoc* arrangements of *Quality Assurance* (QA) to satisfy *ad hoc* external pressure from professional boards, and other stakeholders, such as research agencies and donors. Institutional and operational quality management is not yet an integral part of strategic planning and management at the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS).

IV. CONCLUSION

Many issues should be discussed as regards the *Institutional Quality Management* (IQM) system of the UOFS. There is still both insufficient commitment to and understanding of the absolute necessity to make IQM the most strategic priority next to the finances of the institution. From the IQM perspective of the UOFS, the rationale for explicit, systematic procedures for planning and *Quality Assurance* (QA) and for founding them first and foremost on self-evaluation should be very clear. It is to be found in the requirements of (i) accountability, (ii) obligation, (iii) self-preservation, and (iv) effectiveness.

Accountability: Institutions receiving very large sums of public money have the obligation to account for its effective and efficient use, showing by this that they give value for money. A government that provides subsidies is entitled to expect evidence on the general direction of the expenditure of higher education institutions.

Of course this immediately raises questions of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The opinion is that there are proper limits to both of these principles. Freedom of speech is a vital feature of the pursuit of knowledge and a substantial measure of institutional autonomy is essential to that pursuit. That does not, however, justify the inefficient use of public money or disregard of the broad aims of those who provide subsidies that make possible the existence of public higher education institutions. In terms of the general direction of the higher education sector as a whole, we do think the government must have a co-operative say. There is a balance to be struck. In this field, as in others, where professional conduct is under consideration, self-regulation needs to be backed and supplemented by legal sanction

and external *Quality Assurance* (QA) for the protection of the public interest as is now being nationally planned in higher education in South Africa.

Obligation: Whether it is seen that our first obligations are true to our academic discipline, to our students, or to the institutions which pay our wages, our obligation is to do our jobs in the most effective way possible. Our work must be regulated, as far as the limited resources permit, for optimizing students' learning experiences; this being their due.

Self-preservation: In a competitive market environment quality is, in the last analysis, the essential prerequisite for success. Although higher education does not operate in exactly the same environment as industry, in South Africa the element of competition, both for funds and for students (or for the best students) is increasing. Prosperity, even if not survival, depends foremost on quality.

Effectiveness: The most effective way of securing improved quality is through self-evaluation. Such is the nature of the research and teaching functions that, unless the need for change is owned to by the individual academic, there is little hope of improvement. However, self-evaluation must be informed through critical appraisal of others, the clientele for the service and peer providers. Isolated self-criticism is hardly sufficient.

It follows that an essential element in any system of institutional quality management is an appropriate hierarchy of authority. This not only means that recommendations of quality auditors and assessors are acted upon, but also that each level of the strategic plan can be implemented effectively so that the parts of the plan do not pull against each another. It means that the departmental plans include the implementation of faculty policies, and of the action to be taken,

if the monitoring shows that plans are not being implemented. There should be a distribution of power between vice-chancellors and deans of faculties and heads of departments, which makes implementation of plans not only possible, but also something that can be required. In procuring culture change in a university perhaps the single most important change of attitude required is that heads of departments and other operational leaders understand that they are first and foremost managers of staff, rather than academic leaders with a lot of administration work.

Forward planning and quality management are a very difficult business not only because of the above-mentioned issues, but also because of the ever-changing economic climate and human resource development needs. The expectations and requirements of the numerous stakeholders in higher education also keep changing. Globally in higher education the funding rules, the methods of counting students, monitoring procedures, planning guidelines for submissions to the department, and other continual demands, to provide information to different stakeholders are being changed.

The UOFS will not be completely shielded from all of these demands by a national *Quality Assurance* (QA) framework, but will have to find its own way to deal with this environment. In an ever-changing climate, forward plans must not be taken too literally and must certainly be both flexible to detail and to overall national policy. At this stage, national policies for *Quality Assurance* (QA) are insufficiently explicit and distinct. It is worrying to see that policy implementation will need funding, facilities and expert human resources that are not readily available for higher education in South Africa at this point in time of many needs and expectations. This is where annual analysis of the external and internal environment through quality management is important.

A second issue will be how far the IQM system will satisfy external *Quality Assurance* (QA) requirements for accountability, effectiveness or value for money. As previously mentioned in the discussion of national policies, the indications are that the national *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) will not be functional before year 2001. What is known, is that this system will include a kind of institutional audit and programme assessment (*accreditation*) which could mean adaptation in the *Institution Quality Management* (IQM) system of the UOFS so as to accommodate the purposes of accountability and effectiveness, as expected in legislation.

In almost all 'quality assurance systems' in the world we know that the 'external' quality assurance system greatly influences the 'internal' quality assurance systems of institutions. Bearing this in mind the IQM system of the UOFS is based on the *Higher Education White Paper* (1997) which explains that the functions of the *Higher Education Quality Committee* (HEQC) will include programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion. It should operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

- the formulation of criteria and procedures in consultation with higher education institutions;
- a formative notion of *Quality Assurance* (QA), focused on improvement and development rather than punitive sanction;
- a mixture of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment.

It is very important that an IQM framework should not be too prescriptive and should be primarily intended for the institution's own use.

If the HEQC of the CHE does not change this policy approach it seems possible that the purposes of improvement, accountability and

effectiveness can be reconciled in the *Institutional Quality Assurance* (IQM) system of the UOFS and the 'external' *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) of South Africa. This would be to the extent of starting a 'developmental' and 'supportive' quality assurance system in a radically transforming South African higher education system. The publishing of rankings and failures of institutions will thwart improvement, although it is sometimes used for purposes of accountability and effectiveness in quality assurance systems of some countries.

There are, however, very important prerequisites for a sound relationship between 'internal' and 'external' quality assurance systems. That will without doubt influence the relationship between the 'external' *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) and the IQM of the UOFS as a higher education institution.

- Sufficient time and resources should be provided to develop the system. Experience in several countries has shown that the development of an effective quality assurance system appropriate to the circumstances and needs of a particular country, takes several cycles of activity, and therefore quite a few years to mature. The maturation of standards in higher education systems, as well as the building of mutual trust and confidence between institutions, professions, agency and state, is a slow and demanding process. It requires considerable attention on the part of the leaders concerned, some of which are replaced in the course of time. Those with interests in the development of these systems must be realistic and patient.
- There are no inexpensive quality assurance schemes. The cost to a given system is substantial and continuing; it should be planned for, and mutually provided for, by institutions, state and professional bodies (including financial support for improvement).

- A high priority for the quality assurance system should be to establish an environment of trust by institutions, government and other leaders. The climate for quality assurance should be carefully nurtured and continuously attended to by leaders.
- Incentives and sanctions should be applied according to the purpose (objectives) of the system, and the circumstances within the country. Experience has shown that incentives and sanctions propel most of the much-needed participation of institutional and programme-level academics/professionals in a quality assurance system. In more extreme circumstances (in our country, for instance, where there is a wide range of institutions, stages of development and basic levels of quality and resources), a more fundamental and operational system of incentive and sanctions may have to be applied. Some examples would be access to basic financial aid for students or some operational funds contingent on effective participation in the regulatory system.
- Management information should be adequate to inform the judgements to be made in the system. As in the above-mentioned cases of general procedure such as self-evaluation, independent reviews, incentives and sanctions, the nature of the information needed for a quality assurance system depends both on the purposes of the system, and circumstances to be regulated existing in the units.

These prerequisites already emphasized some of the reasons why difficulties will be experienced by the UOFS to implement its IQM system in relation to the external *Quality Assurance System* (QAS). Internally the UOFS will not succeed if some of the problems discussed above (**Phase 1** of IQM, see *Section 4*) and still present in the institution are not addressed. Examples are the following:

- *Collegialism versus managerialism*: In the implementation of the institutional and operational quality management frameworks explained in **Phase 2 (Section 4)**, the typical 'traditional' view of influential academics at the UOFS could again lead to the 'inertia' described in **Phase 1 (Section 4)**. This view basically means that in some countries universities still tend to have very strong departments (i) with deans and rectors who have very little power; (ii) where the ideal structure of governance is still held to be the self-regulating community of scholars and (iii) where rectors or deans are no more than 'co-ordinators of our wishes' in departments and academic programmes. This model is not workable today. It will not deliver what is required, whereas it does still reflect the working of some of the universities in South Africa. Very successful universities now have stronger managerial-orientated structures, with a clear hierarchy of scientifically informed problem solving and decision-making, after *thorough communication and consultation* with relevant stakeholders. Such structures more easily lend themselves to a competitive higher education environment, as that in which all institutions in South Africa now find themselves, and where quick institutional responses to challenges of a highly competitive political and socio-economic environment are required.

This does not mean disregard for balanced academic freedom and autonomy. Position power in a higher education institution should be used sparingly. If in the last analysis, however, you cannot, or will not, dispose of any non-performant academics, whatever the position they may hold, you have neither the right leaders at the top, nor the right structure for an organization responsible for very large sums of public money. Poor performance must be addressed and dealt with firmly. Students should be protected from its effects, good staff

should not be demotivated because of it being tolerated, and the taxpayer should not be short-changed by having to pay for it.

Managerialism should not mean authoritarianism. However, large organizations such as the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) require firm leadership and management. That does not exclude consultation and/or communication. Indeed, consultation and communication are essential. Ownership by staff of institutional planning and policies and quality management are absolutely vital if there is to be more than token implementation. It is the job of good leaders and managers to procure that ownership through communication and consultation, on the basis of research in higher education and firm decision-making.

- *Consultation and communication:* An important tool for consultation and communication and a means of both integrating the strategic management model and assisting the ownership of change, is an appropriate problem-solving, decision-making and implementation structure. This structure would consider the plans and findings on quality issues and advise the appropriate head of department, dean or vice-chancellor, as the case may be, recommending actions to be taken. For the true academic leader the big trick is to persuade faculty and departmental leaders themselves to accept responsibility for implementing quality change within agreed devolved annual budgets. Requests for late planning and more resources passed up the system to 'the centre' have to be steadfastly resisted through clear policies. An open and democratic budgeting process, closely integrated with strategic planning, is imperative for this to be successful.

- *Cost of the IQM system:* The cost of quality assurance in a developing higher education system, with so many needs, cannot be over-emphasized. The cost of any IQM system, for that matter, is difficult to accurately quantify, as was to be experienced through the questionnaire surveys discussed above. We have no doubt, nonetheless, that it is fairly expensive. Many academics would argue that more would be done to ameliorate quality if all money spent on the Quality Assurance System could be devoted instead to academic departments for recruiting more and better academics, equipping the laboratories or providing additional books for the library. We do not believe that if extra money had been available, it would have been used simply to continue for a bit longer exactly the same things that have been done in the past, although there were fewer demands and needs. What is in fact necessary to cope with issues like equity, redress, efficiency, etc. is better quality work in the functions of teaching/learning, research and community service supported by a different approach to the academic's role. More of the same is not the answer. However, these critics do raise a genuine question. It is important to increase expenditure on 'improving' rather than on 'inspecting' quality to see if it is there. A balance must be attained between expenditure on quality academic work and that of assuring its quality. The UOFS will have to calculate for its Quality Assurance System not to be overly heavy-handed, time-consuming or expensive.
- *Research in higher education and Quality Assurance:* There are many hurdles still to be got over by the UOFS in particular, and by higher education in general, in South Africa. It is firmly believed that modes of improving quality in higher education might be more crucial in South Africa than in many other countries. Ways must be found for attaining the highest achievement and increased participation of hitherto disadvantaged groups. A differentiated

pattern of the system has to be found which promotes excellence without channelling less prepared students into segmented sectors, thus avoiding the infamous 'cooling-out' diversification which is often still creeping up in current international debate. Research in higher education, and specifically on quality management, under these conditions could prove to be valuable in South Africa, and on the whole of the African continent. It could pursue the following issues on quality, that are valuable for the UOFS as well as being important for research units that support higher education institutions in strategic areas of development i.e. 'quality':

- (i) **Research** should contribute towards a philosophy of quality that appropriately deals with existing tensions between short-term and long-term goals in higher education, in the concern for the highest quality and best efforts to reduce inequality, that set a new agenda of differentiation, neither promoting average mediocrity nor stratifying in a way that the historically disadvantaged are 'cooled out'. Research should help sharpen the conceptual basis. The results of these efforts could be an extraordinarily valuable contribution from South Africa to the international search of convincing concepts of quality in higher education.
- (ii) **Research** could critically review higher education policies in South Africa, notably the policies for quality assurance, but also other policies, which might have an immediate effect on the 'quality'. Such studies could establish changes in the underlying concepts, discrepancies between concepts and actual implementation, and unintended effects of policies, etc.
- (iii) **Research** could focus on (re)structuring higher education curricula processes at South African higher education institutions,

thereby aiming to establish more successful ways of improving quality and to disentangle which settings of intra-institutional diversity are valuable learning environments for students from diverse educational backgrounds. This helps both to identify the most successful ways of contributing to highest quality and of reaching the highest success of equity and redress policies.

- (iv) **Research** related to quality of higher education should not only focus on internal processes and achievements in higher education, but also on the outcomes outside higher education. Critical analysis of graduate employment and work, utilization of research and impact of service of higher education on society are needed, in order not to be trapped by the sterility of purely academic quality paradigms.

Higher education research units should also play a role in training professionals in higher education who are in charge of institutional research, guidance and counselling, staff development, quality assurance, contacts with the world of work, etc.

International co-operation in higher education research, concentrating on quality in this particular instance, might be valuable in order to draw from world-wide experience for enriching the relatively less advanced concepts and practices in, especially, developing countries. It might also strengthen the position of higher education research units aiming to examine critically the higher education policies on quality of the country, suspecting that analyses are bound to be in conflict with prevailing policies. However, caution is required because 'experts' in the domain of quality issues of higher education might be so often counter-productive partners for this type of research programme in the specific South African setting.

- (v) As South Africa is ready to collaborate with other African countries, units of research in higher education in South Africa could serve as centres of communication, for experts all over Africa, to ensure that *quality management* and *assurance* is given its critically important place to support an **African Renaissance**.

APPENDIX 1.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AS REGARDS THE SELF-
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES SENT TO THE HEADS OF
DEPARTMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ORANGE
FREE STATE (UOFS)**

Heinrich Alt

1. INTRODUCTION

To facilitate the process of self-evaluation (with a view to the planned institutional audit of 1999) the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) of the *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) compiled questionnaires to be completed by the heads of departments. The questionnaires have a threefold purpose, namely:

- **Questionnaire A:** To determine whether a planning procedure exists in the department and also to determine whether the procedure is in line with the broader vision/mission/policy/objectives/goals/strategies of the university.
- **Questionnaires B, C and D:** To determine which *Quality Assurance* (QA) mechanisms and procedures exist in the department. A *Likert* Scale was also inserted to indicate the degree of importance of the specific *Quality Assurance* mechanisms and procedures. Space was left for comments (per item) and also for general comments. In this space heads of departments were invited to address any issues as regards the existence and effectivity of the *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures in their departments.
- **Questionnaire E:** To gain clarity as regards to which *Quality Assurance* (QA) mechanisms and procedures are considered to be the most important by heads of departments.

These questionnaires were distributed, for the first time, during the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) meeting, which took place on 24 July 1998. Certain amendments were proposed and considered along with other individual inputs for the questionnaires that were

developed more fully and discussed during the *Quality Assurance Workshop* (27 August 1998). In the meantime Dr Karel Esterhuyse lent assistance in the coding of the questionnaires. At the beginning of the fourth term a mini audit was piloted to determine whether the questionnaires are user-friendly, coherent and clear. The feedback of the pilot audit was processed and the questionnaires were finalized and distributed. All heads of departments received questionnaires. Heads of departments were given three weeks to complete the questionnaires and to return them to the offices of the various deans. The questionnaires were gathered, coded and sent to the computer centre for the development of the database. Dr Esterhuyse was responsible for calculating the means and the frequencies. Self-evaluation reports (for each faculty and a total perspective) were written by using this information and these reports were submitted at the *Quality Assurance Committee* meeting of 3 February 1999. The self-evaluation reports were sent to the deans for perusal.

Enclosed is an executive summary as well as the complete text of the general report and the specific faculty reports. The data in the general report is not represented within faculty context, but for the institution as a whole.

2. SUMMARY OF DATA

These *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) questionnaires were distributed to 119 heads of departments of whom 107 completed the questionnaires, in other words a response rate of 89.9 per cent.

Questionnaire A: Departmental planning procedure

Question 1: Does your department have planning procedures that include the mission/policy/objectives/goals/strategies? If so, indicate the extent of your satisfaction with the processes and briefly motivate your answer.

The vast majority of heads of departments (91.9 per cent) indicated that planning procedures exist in their departments.

Just more than half (68.3 per cent) are satisfied with the planning procedures.

Their satisfaction is mainly based on factors such as participative management, shared ownership and unity in the department, positive feedback from the staff and the fact that they function within faculty guidelines.

Dissatisfaction on the side of the heads of departments is due to a shortage of staff, staff who are not motivated, a lack of funds and uncertainties as regards the future.

Question 2: How are the above-mentioned planning procedures discussed among staff and students in your department with a view to implementation and self-evaluation (Quality Assurance (QA))?

With regard to the participation of staff and students in the planning procedures, the following was found:

All heads of departments who responded indicated that their staff is involved in the planning procedures. As far as the students are concerned, just over half (57.7 per cent) of the heads of departments who answered the question, indicated that students are involved in one way or another (e.g. student bodies, personal communication, informally, etc.).

Question 3: To which extent are the above-mentioned planning procedures in line with the broader vision/mission/strategic planning procedure of the UOFS?

The majority of the heads of departments (92.7 per cent) indicated that their planning procedures are in line with the broader planning procedures of the university.

Questionnaire B: Teaching/learning – undergraduate study

The following teaching/learning *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (*Table 1*) are used by the majority of heads of departments (>78.5 per cent) and are generally regarded as extremely important.

Table 1. Teaching/learning Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (used by a majority of heads of departments)

Mechanisms and procedures	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
• Examining		
• Internal examining	85.9	Extremely important
• Internal moderators	83.1	Extremely important
• Student development		
• Learning facilitation, c.g. tutorials	78.5	Extremely important
• Programme planning		
• External stakeholders (the place of work, employment interests, the community, etc.)	85.0	Extremely important
• Staff appointment and promotion		
• Selection committees	81.3	Extremely important
• Post descriptions	81.3	Extremely important
• Qualifications	85.0	Extremely important
• Support Services		
• Secretarial support	82.2	Extremely important
• Technological facilities	85.9	Extremely important
• Information technology support	85.9	Extremely important
• Effective communication channels	85.9	Extremely important
• Departmental evaluation		
• Self-evaluation	80.3	Extremely important
Benchmarking		
Benchmarking with regard to similar departments in various institutions at national level	78.5	Extremely important

The following teaching/learning *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (*Table 2*) are used by a relatively small percentage of heads of departments and are regarded as less, fairly and/or extremely important.

Table 2. Teaching/learning Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (used by relatively small percentage of heads of departments)

Mechanisms and procedures	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
Student admissions		
• Standardized tests	16.8	Less important
Examining		
• External examining	44.8	Extremely important
• External moderators	43.9	Extremely important
Student development		
• Bridging programmes (academic support and development programmes)	42.0	Fairly important
Staff evaluation		
• Class visits	35.5	Less important
Benchmarking		
Benchmarking with regard to similar departments at various institutions at a local level	38.3	Extremely important

Questionnaire C: Teaching/learning – Postgraduate study

The following teaching/learning (postgraduate study) *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (Table 3) are used by the majority of the heads of departments (>80 per cent) and are generally regarded as extremely important.

Table 3. Teaching/learning (postgraduate study) Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures of great importance used by a majority of heads of departments

Mechanisms and procedures	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
Examining		
• Internal examining	82.2	Extremely important
Student development		
• Regular feedback as regards progress	85.9	Extremely important
• Research orientation and development	83.1	Extremely important
Programme planning		
• External stakeholders (the place of work, employment interests, community, etc.)	80.3	Extremely important
Staff appointment and promotion		
• Qualifications	85.0	Extremely important
• Research outputs	81.3	Extremely important
Staff evaluation		
• Research outputs (accredited journals where state subsidy is concerned)	79.4	Extremely important
Support Services		
• Secretarial support	84.1	Extremely important
• Technological facilities	85.0	Extremely important
• Information technology support	85.0	Extremely important
• Effective communication channels	85.0	Extremely important
Benchmarking		
• Benchmarking with regard to similar departments at various institutions at national level	78.5	Extremely important
Postgraduate study guidance		
• Regular meetings between the study leader and the candidate	86.9	Extremely important
• Reports as regards theses and dissertations	78.5	Extremely important

The following teaching/learning (postgraduate study) *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (*Table 4*) are used by a relatively small percentage of heads of departments and are regarded as less important, fairly important and extremely important.

Table 4. Teaching/learning (postgraduate study) Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (less important) used by a relatively small percentage of heads of departments

Mechanisms and procedures	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
Student admissions		
• Standardized tests	14.0	Less important
Staff development		
• Incentives for teaching/learning outputs	34.5	Extremely important
• Teaching/learning awards	28.9	Fairly important
• Capacity-building activities (as part of affirmative action)	41.1	Fairly important
Staff evaluation		
• Class visits	32.7	Fairly important
Professional registration		
• Medical professional bodies	30.8	Extremely important
• Professional bodies for engineering	8.4	Fairly important
• Other professional bodies or organizations	24.2	Extremely important
Benchmarking		
• Benchmarking with regard to similar departments at various institutions at a local level	43.9	Extremely important

Questionnaire D: Research

The following research *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (*Table 5*) are used by the majority of the heads of departments (≥ 78.5 per cent) and are generally regarded as extremely important.

Table 5. Research Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures

Mechanisms and procedures	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
Consideration of articles published in accredited magazines	90.6	Extremely important
Consideration of other publications	86.9	Fairly important
Consideration of attendance of conferences	84.1	Fairly important
Consideration of papers read during conferences	90.6	Extremely important
Research support and capacity-building		
Infrastructure in terms of technological support and proof-reading	84.1	Fairly important
Support as regards the acquisition of membership of professional councils	90.6	Extremely important

The following research *Quality Assurance* (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (*Table 6*) are used by a relatively small percentage of heads of departments and are regarded as fairly important.

Table 6. Research Quality Assurance (QA) (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (less important) used by a relatively small percentage of heads of departments

Research support and capacity-building	Percentage of use	Degree of importance
• Incentives for research outputs	49.5	Fairly important
• Research awards	51.4	Fairly important

Questionnaire E: Prioritizing quality assurance mechanisms and procedures

Below is a list of *Quality Assurance* (QA) mechanisms and procedures to which heads of departments give highest importance (not necessarily in order of priority):

- student admissions;
- support services;
- departmental evaluation;
- examining;
- programme planning;
- staff development;
- standardization;
- articles published in accredited magazines;
- papers and conferences;
- incentives for research outputs;
- research outputs.

3. COMMENTS BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

With regard to the comments made by heads of departments, the following questions, amongst others, were asked:

Question 1: Would you like to add any Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms and procedures which, in your opinion, were not mentioned in the above-mentioned section of undergraduate teaching/learning?

Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms and procedures added by heads of departments (not a complete list):

- internships;
- selection procedures for law students;
- course information and manuals;
- selected teaching material;
- delivery mechanisms;
- comprehensiveness of manuals;
- guarding against easy tests and examinations;
- appointing professional advisory committees in order to obtain better inputs
- as regards the applicability of courses and to facilitate the possibility of external funding;
- partnerships;
- curriculum in accordance with health care needs;
- inputs of stakeholders;
- committees to provide study guidance and planning committees;
- annual evaluation instrument for progress by a postgraduate student;
- active canvassing programmes.

Question 2: Do you wish to draw the attention to any gaps or problems that do exist in your Quality Assurance System (QAS)?

Gaps identified by heads of departments (not a complete list):

- financial pressure on the department and the resultant demands with regard to the development of the community becoming problematic;
- the workload becoming unmanageable as a result of reduced posts;
- lack of uniform criteria for the promotion and appointment of staff;
- difficulty to establish whether the lecturer is delivering quality teaching;
- lack of a formal system for the evaluation of staff by students: evaluation is *ad hoc* and is not done on a formal basis;
- lack of external examining and moderating of undergraduate courses;
- many mechanisms are informal – attention must be given to more structured mechanisms;
- capacity building activities: until now there has been no opportunity for such ;
- evaluation of staff presenting a problem: a reliable, acceptable system has not yet been implemented;
- lack of time for research as a result of the teaching load and because of essential community service;
- limited funds;
- lack of formal structure to measure creative outputs, as is the case in *inter alia* accredited magazines;
- lack of official research recognition;
- lack of attention given to the comparison with other departments.

Question 3: Any other comments?

Examples of further comments:

- laboratory and library facilities must remain of a high quality;
- need to improve staff complement which would allow teachers to give sufficient attention to students;
- with regard to training that is relevant to the profession, the quality of the 'products' (students) of the department is of extreme importance for the growth of student numbers;
- the recognition of research at an international level is of the utmost importance;
- the publication of articles in subsidized magazines at an international level must be encouraged; this is of even greater importance than simply paying visits to foreign countries during 'obscure' congresses;
- few mechanisms exist to reward clinicians for their research.

With regard to the comments concerning the prioritizing of Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms and procedures, the heads of departments had to answer the following two questions:

Question 1: Would you like to add any Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms and procedures which you consider might not have been mentioned in the above-mentioned section of postgraduate teaching/learning?

Questions 2: Would you like to add any further explanation with regard to your comments concerning the above-mentioned teaching/learning Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms and procedures at the postgraduate level?

Considering the two above-mentioned questions:

- Staff development was placed first, appointments and promotion second and student development was only third. These three elements go hand-in-hand and are equally important.
- We do, feel, however, that attention is first paid to staff development in view of their becoming fully competent to undertake effective student development.
- Student development at undergraduate levels receives high priority. Success in this regard gives rise to success in postgraduate courses.
- Research themes on campus that affect more than one department must lead to workshops.

4. EVALUATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Heads of departments made the following comments regarding the Questionnaires:

- Some of the questions focus on programme approach, which is only now being put into place.
- Some of the questions would be addressed more specifically in another context.
- Are the questions focused on the 'old' or on the 'new' dispensation?
- This questionnaire must be redefined, as some aspects are not clear.
- Certain aspects belong to the faculty level, rather than to the department.
- Some mechanisms and procedures were not marked, because we have no control over them and are thus unable to decide.

It is important to draw attention to the fact that the questionnaire can only determine the degree of importance of the mechanisms and procedures, which were indicated by the head of department as being **in existence**. Certain heads of departments indicated the degree of importance, but also indicated that the mechanism and procedure **do not exist** in the department. Such options are not taken into account in the questionnaire.

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APPENDIX 2.
QUALITY ASSURANCE (SELF-EVALUATION)
QUESTIONNAIRES TO THE RECTORS, DEANS, AND
DIRECTORS

Quality assurance (self-evaluation)

Questionnaire

Department

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Proposed policies for Quality Assurance in higher education in the *Education White Paper* and the *Higher Education Act* (1997) will influence the *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) for higher education in the future. These documents provide important guidelines for the establishment of a *Quality Assurance System* (QAS) for South African Higher Education, such as the following:

- The primary responsibility for Quality Assurance rests with higher education institutions themselves (self-assessment/self-evaluation/self-study).
- A Task Team of the *Council on Higher Education* (CHE) is busy with the establishment of a *Higher Education Quality Committee* (HEQC) in compliance with the *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act* and the *Higher Education Act*. It is likely that the *Quality Promotion Unit* (QPU) of the *South African Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association* (SAUVCA) will be closely involved in the establishment of the HEQC as an *Education and Training Quality Assurance Body* (ETQA) for Higher Education.
- There also is no doubt that these new developments in *Quality Assurance* (QA) will continuously raise expectations in connection with efficient and effective self-evaluation and *Quality Assurance* (QA) in universities.

Until new Quality Assurance bodies are established, the *Quality Promotion Unit* (QPU) of the *South African Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association* (SAUVCA) is continuing with institutional auditing based on the *White Paper* and the *Higher Education Act*. All

universities committed themselves (on a voluntary basis in SAUVCA) to establish *Quality Assurance Systems* (QAS) in their institutions (based on self-evaluation). The existence of these *Quality Assurance Systems* (QAS) at the institutional level will be audited by the QPU.

The QPU has the following purposes:

- (a) assist universities in conducting productive institutional self-evaluation at different levels;
- (b) create a basis in the higher education system for the accreditation of programmes in view of articulation.

During the first cycle of auditing, institutional audits are performed with the aim of verifying the existence of mechanisms and procedures to ensure quality at an institution, and not of evaluating the quality *per se* of the various areas of an institution's functioning. Auditors inquire, therefore, on which Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures exist in respect of all areas of the institution and how they function with the different areas and levels of the institution. Six universities have already been audited. The *University of the Orange Free State* (UOFS) will be audited in 1999.

In order to facilitate the process of self-evaluation (in anticipation of the 1999 institutional audit), the *Quality Assurance Committee* (QAC) of the UOFS compiled a set of departmental questionnaires, which has three purposes:

Questionnaire A: to identify the planning process of the department and to determine whether it is in line with the broader vision/mission/policies/goals/objectives/ strategies of the university (fitness *for* and *of* purpose).

Questionnaires B, C and D: to determine which Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures are in place in the department. A Likert scale is inserted to denote the degree of importance of the specific mechanism and procedure. Space is left for comments (per item) and also for general comments. In this space you are invited to address issues concerning the existence, effectiveness and efficiency of Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures in your department.

Questionnaire E: to elicit your perspectives on the most important Quality Assurance mechanisms and procedures for your department in the future.

Your co-operation in completing these questionnaires is very important and will be highly appreciated.

Questionnaire A: Departmental planning process

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Faculty:

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Department:

1. Does your department have a planning process including mission/policies/goals/objectives/strategies? If yes, indicate how satisfied you are with these processes and briefly motivate your answer.

.....

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		1-2
		3-4
		5-6

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= Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

2. How do you communicate the above planning process with staff and students in your department for purposes of implementation and self-evaluation (quality assurance)?

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		7-8
		9-10
		11-12

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= Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

3. To what degree is the above-mentioned planning process in line with the broader vision/mission/strategic planning process of the UOFS?

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		13-14
		15-16
		17-18

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= Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

Questionnaire B: Teaching/Learning - undergraduate studies

Faculty:

Department:

Which quality assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures do you apply in your department?

Please put a checkmark (x) in the 'Yes' or 'No' block. If you have inserted a checkmark in the 'Yes' block, please denote the degree of importance of the specific mechanism and procedure in your department on the Likert scale, which ranges from 'Not important' to 'Very important'. Please encircle the relevant number. There is also space for comments on these specific mechanisms and procedures.

Mechanisms and Procedures	Yes	No	Likert Scale				Comments on how these mechanisms and procedures are expressed as a matter of degree	For office use only
			Not important	Fairly important	Quite important	Very important		
1. Student access <i>Do you make use of the following information when selecting students for courses/programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>								1
								2-3
								4
1.1 Matric results			1	2	3	4		5
1.2 Standardized testing			1	2	3	4		6
1.3 Recognition of prior learning			1	2	3	4		7
1.4 Other (please specify)			1	2	3	4		8
2. Examination <i>Do you make use of the following to assess your undergraduate course/programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>								
2.1 Internal examiners			1	2	3	4		9
2.2 External examiners			1	2	3	4		10
2.3 Internal moderators			1	2	3	4		11
2.4 External moderators			1	2	3	4		12

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3. Student development and support <i>Do you provide the following to students and how important are they in your department?</i>													
3.1 Learning facilitation (e.g. tutorials)			1	2	3	4							13
3.2 Bridging programmes (Academic support or development programmes)			1	2	3	4							14
3.3 Regular feedback on their progress			1	2	3	4							15
4. Programme planning <i>Do the following play a role in the planning and development of your programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>													
4.1 Policies w.r.t. inter alia registration of programmes such as stipulated by the NQF* and SAQA*			1	2	3	4							16
4.2 External stakeholders (world of work, labour needs, society, etc.)			1	2	3	4							17
4.3 Professional bodies			1	2	3	4							18
4.4 Student inputs			1	2	3	4							19
5. Staff appointments and promotion <i>Do the following play a role in the appointment and promotion of staff and how important are they in your department?</i>													
5.1 Selection panels			1	2	3	4							20
5.2 Job description			1	2	3	4							21
5.3 Work contracts			1	2	3	4							22
5.4 Qualifications			1	2	3	4							23
5.5 Teaching experience			1	2	3	4							24
5.6 Research outputs			1	2	3	4							25
5.7 Employment equity issues (e.g. race and gender)			1	2	3	4							26
6. Staff development <i>Do the following play a role for staff development and how important are they in your department?</i>													
6.1 Induction (initiation) programmes for new staff			1	2	3	4							27
6.2 Mentorships			1	2	3	4							28
6.3 In-service training			1	2	3	4							29
6.4 Incentive for teaching/learning outputs			1	2	3	4							30
6.5 Teaching/learning awards			1	2	3	4							31
6.6 Capacity-building activities (i.e. as part of affirmative action)			1	2	3	4							32

7. Staff appraisal <i>Do you make use of the following and how important are they in your department?</i>											
7.1 Class visits			1	2	3	4					33
7.2 Peer assessment (Assessment by colleagues)			1	2	3	4					34
7.3 Student assessment			1	2	3	4					35
7.4 Results (e.g. dropout and pass rates)			1	2	3	4					36
7.5 Student evaluation of teaching/lecturers			1	2	3	4					37
7.6 Research outputs (Accredited journals where state subsidy is involved)			1	2	3	4					38
8. Support services <i>Do you make use of the following mechanisms and procedures and how important are they in your department?</i>											
8.1 Secretarial support			1	2	3	4					39
8.2 Professional assistance			1	2	3	4					40
8.3 Technology facilities			1	2	3	4					41
8.4 Information technology support			1	2	3	4					42
8.5 Effective communication channels			1	2	3	4					43
8.6 Laboratory facilities			1	2	3	4					44
8.7 Departmental/faculty library			1	2	3	4					45
9. Departmental evaluation <i>Do the following mechanisms and procedures exist and how important are they in your department?</i>											
9.1 Self-evaluation			1	2	3	4					46
9.2 Peer evaluation			1	2	3	4					47
9.3 External evaluation			1	2	3	4					48
10. Professional registration <i>Do you present programmes which necessitate registration with the following external professional bodies or associations?</i>											
10.1 Medical professional bodies			1	2	3	4					49
10.2 Engineering professional bodies			1	2	3	4					50
10.3 Other professional bodies or associations? †			1	2	3	4					51

11. Benchmarking (Standardization) <i>Do you make use of the following benchmarking activities in your department and how important are they?</i>									
11.1 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar departments in different institutions on a regional level.			1	2	3	4			52
11.2 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar departments in different institutions on a national level.			1	2	3	4			53
11.3 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar department in different institutions on an international level.			1	2	3	4			54

*NQF - National Qualifications Framework

**SAQA - South African qualifications authority

☐ - Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

† Please specify:

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(1) Comments:

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(1.1) Do you want to add quality assurance mechanisms and procedures that were not mentioned in this previous section of teaching/learning?

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(1.2) Any clarification of your comments on the undergraduate teaching/learning quality mechanisms and procedures?

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(1.3) Do you want to indicate any problems or gaps that might exist in your quality assurance system?

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(1.4) Any other comments?

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Questionnaire C: Teaching/learning – Postgraduate studies (honours, masters and doctorate level)

Faculty:

Department:

Which quality assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures do you apply in your department?

Please put a checkmark (x) in the 'Yes' or 'No' block. If you have inserted a checkmark in the 'Yes' block, please denote the degree of importance of the specific mechanism and procedure in your department on the Likert scale, which ranges from 'Not important' to 'Very important'. Please encircle the relevant number. There is also space for comments on these specific mechanisms and procedures.

Mechanisms and Procedures	Yes	No	Likert Scale				Comments on how these mechanisms and procedures are expressed as a matter of degree	For office use only
			Not important	Fairly important	Quite important	Very important		
1. Student access <i>Do you make use of the following information when selecting students for courses/programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>								1
								2-3
								4
1.1 School and undergraduate results			1	2	3	4		5
1.2 Standardised testing			1	2	3	4		6
1.3 Recognition of prior learning			1	2	3	4		7
1.4 Other-specify			1	2	3	4		8
2. Examination <i>Do you make use of the following to assess your postgraduate courses/programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>								
2.1 Internal examiners			1	2	3	4		9
2.2 External examiners			1	2	3	4		10
2.3 Internal moderators			1	2	3	4		11
2.4 External moderators			1	2	3	4		12

3. Student development and support							
<i>Do you provide the following to students and how important are they in your department?</i>							
3.1 Learning facilitation (e.g. tutorials)			1	2	3	4	
3.2 Regular feedback on their progress			1	2	3	4	
3.3 Research orientation and development			1	2	3	4	
4. Programme planning							
<i>Do the following play a role in the planning and development of your programmes and how important are they in your department?</i>							
4.1 Policies such as stipulated by the NQF* and SAQA**			1	2	3	4	
4.2 External stakeholders (world of work, labour needs, society, etc.)			1	2	3	4	
4.3 Professional bodies			1	2	3	4	
4.4 Student inputs			1	2	3	4	
5. Staff appointments and promotion							
<i>Do the following play a role in the appointment and promotion of staff and how important are they in your department?</i>							
5.1 Selection panels			1	2	3	4	
5.2 Job description			1	2	3	4	
5.3 Work contracts			1	2	3	4	
5.4 Qualifications			1	2	3	4	
5.5 Teaching experience			1	2	3	4	
5.6 Research outputs			1	2	3	4	
5.7 Employment equity issues (e.g. race and gender)			1	2	3	4	
6. Staff development							
<i>Do the following play a role for staff development and how important are they in your department?</i>							
6.1 Induction programmes			1	2	3	4	
6.2 Mentorships			1	2	3	4	
6.3 In-service training			1	2	3	4	
6.4 Incentive for research outputs			1	2	3	4	
6.5 Incentive for teaching outputs			1	2	3	4	
6.6 Teaching rewards			1	2	3	4	
6.7 Capacity-building activities (i.e. as part of affirmative action)			1	2	3	4	

Transformation and institutional quality management within a South African university

7. Staff appraisal						
<i>Do you make use of the following and how important are they in your department?</i>						
7.1 Class visits			1	2	3	4
7.2 Peer assessment			1	2	3	4
7.3 Evaluation of student learning/progress			1	2	3	4
7.4 Results (e.g. dropout and pass rates)			1	2	3	4
7.5 Student evaluation of lecturers/supervision			1	2	3	4
7.6 Research outputs			1	2	3	4
8. Support services						
<i>Do you make use of the following mechanisms and procedures and how important are they in your department?</i>						
8.1 Secretarial support			1	2	3	4
8.2 Professional assistance			1	2	3	4
8.3 Technology facilities			1	2	3	4
8.4 Information technology support			1	2	3	4
8.5 Effective communication channels			1	2	3	4
8.6 Laboratory facilities			1	2	3	4
8.7 Departmental / faculty library			1	2	3	4
9.Departmental evaluation						
<i>Do you make use of the following mechanisms and procedures and how important are they in your department?</i>						
9.1 Self-evaluation			1	2	3	4
9.2 Peer evaluation			1	2	3	4
9.3 External evaluation			1	2	3	4
10. Professional registration						
<i>Do you present programmes which necessitate registration with the following external professional bodies or associations?</i>						
10.1 Medical professional bodies			1	2	3	4
10.2 Engineering professional bodies			1	2	3	4
10.3 Other professional bodies or associations? †			1	2	3	4

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11. Benchmarking (Standardization) <i>Do you make use of the following benchmarking activities in your department and how important are they?</i>									
11.1 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar departments in different institutions on a regional level.			1	2	3	4			53
11.2 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar departments in different institutions on a national level.			1	2	3	4			54
11.3 Benchmarking (standardization) with similar department in different institutions on an international level.			1	2	3	4			55
12. Postgraduate supervision <i>Do you make use of the following in your department and how important are they?</i>									
12.1 Regular meetings between supervisors and candidates			1	2	3	4			56
12.2 Reports on doctorate theses and master's dissertations			1	2	3	4			57

* NQF - National Qualifications Framework

** SAQA - South African qualifications authority

 = Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

† Please specify:

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(2) Comments:

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(2.1) Do you want to add quality assurance mechanisms and procedures that were not mentioned in this previous section of teaching and learning?

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Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(2.2) Any clarification of your comments on the undergraduate teaching/ learning quality mechanisms and procedures?

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Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(2.3) Do you want to indicate any problems or gaps that might exist in your quality assurance system?

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Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(2.4) Any other comments?

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**Please tick if an extra
information sheet
is attached**

Questionnaire D: Research

Faculty:

Department:

Which quality assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures do you apply in your department?

Please put a checkmark (x) in the 'Yes' or 'No' block. If you have inserted a checkmark in the 'Yes' block, please denote the degree of importance of the specific mechanism and procedure in your department on the Likert scale, which ranges from 'Not important' to 'Very important'. Please encircle the relevant number. There is also space for comments on these specific mechanisms and procedures.

1. Existing mechanisms and procedures										
<i>Do you make use of the following mechanisms and procedures for the assessment of research in your department?</i>										1
										2-3
										4
1.1 Consideration of articles published in accredited journals			1	2	3	4				5
1.2 Consideration of other publications			1	2	3	4				6
1.3 Consideration of membership of professional boards			1	2	3	4				7
1.4 Consideration of membership of editorial boards			1	2	3	4				8
1.5 Consideration of conference attendance			1	2	3	4				9
1.6 Consideration of papers presented at conferences			1	2	3	4				10
1.7 Assessment of staff's ability to do research			1	2	3	4				11
1.8 Assessment of students' ability to do research			1	2	3	4				12
1.9 Clearly formulated funding procedures			1	2	3	4				13

2. Research support and development/Capacity-building <i>Do you make use of the following supportive mechanisms and procedures? How important are they in your department?</i>										
2.1 Infrastructure in terms of technological assistance and proof-reading			1	2	3	4				14
2.2 Support towards achieving fellowships of professional associations, etc.			1	2	3	4				15
2.3 Guidelines and principles for peer review			1	2	3	4				16
2.4 Research support and development activities such as workshops, seminars (on research methodology, writing skills, presenting papers, etc.)			1	2	3	4				17
2.5 Actions towards the establishment of a vibrant research culture			1	2	3	4				18
2.6 Supportive environment for conducting research (e.g. work arrangements)			1	2	3	4				19
2.7 Incentives for research output			1	2	3	4				20
2.8 Research awards			1	2	3	4				21
2.9 Financial support			1	2	3	4				22



Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(3) Comments:

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(3.1) Do you want to add quality assurance mechanisms and procedures that were not mentioned in this previous section of research?

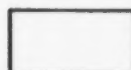
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(3.2) Any clarification of your comments on the undergraduate teaching/learning quality mechanisms and procedures?

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(3.3) Do you want to indicate any problems or gaps that might exist in your quality assurance system?

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☐ = Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(3.4) Any other comments?

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Questionnaire E: Prioritization of quality assurance mechanisms and procedures

1. Teaching/learning – Undergraduate studies

In studying the above examples of quality mechanisms and procedures in questionnaire B, which five of these Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (or any others you would like to mention) do you recognize as the **most important** for Quality Assurance in your department in future? Please indicate the order of importance, starting with the most important.

Mechanisms and procedures			
1			1-2
2			3-4
3			5-6
4			7-8
5			9-10

(1) Comments

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(1.1) Any comments on your prioritization of the above quality mechanisms and procedures?

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(1.2) Any other comments?

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2. Teaching/learning – Postgraduate studies

In studying the examples of quality mechanisms and procedures in questionnaire C, which five of these Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (or any others you would like to mention) do you recognize as the **most important** for Quality Assurance in this department in the future? Please indicate the order of importance, starting with the most important.

Mechanisms and procedures		
1		1-2
2		3-4
3		5-6
4		7-8
5		9-10

(2) Comments

For office use only

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(2.1) Any comments on your choices connected to the above quality mechanisms and procedures?

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(2.2) Any other comments?

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- Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

3. Research

In studying the examples of quality mechanisms and procedures in questionnaire D, which five of these Quality Assurance (self-evaluation) mechanisms and procedures (or any others you would like to mention) do you recognize as the **most important** for Quality Assurance in this department in the future? Please indicate the order of importance, starting with the most important.

Mechanisms and procedures		
1		1-2
2		3-4
3		5-6
4		7-8
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(3) Comments

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(3.1) Any comments on your choices connected to the above quality mechanisms and procedures?

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Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

(3.2) Any other comments?

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APPENDIX 3.
SELECTED CRITERIA FORT PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Some of the essential self-evaluation components of programme planning and implementation will now briefly be described to illustrate the progress being made with quality management of programmes.

Essential self-evaluation components of programme planning and implementation

- **Preamble**

What are the latest international comparative perspectives and national policy guidelines with regard to programme development (planning) and evaluation?

- **General policy aims and objectives**

What are the general aims and specific objectives of the policy? The principal aim of any programme evaluation policy should be to ensure continued improvement of the quality of education offered. The objectives express the goals and expected results from the implementation of the policy and the resulting programme evaluations.

- **Responsibility sharing**

Who are the important role-players and stakeholders to be involved in programme development and evaluation? Which authority is in charge of implementing the evaluation policy?

- **A programme information system**

Which components should form part of such an information system in order to be effectively utilized for programme evaluation and management? Examples of components are indicators and data that pertain to enrolment, success rate, teachers' and learners'

perceptions of the programme, job placements, employers' assessment of the programme, etc.

- **Method of identifying the programme to be evaluated**

Not all programmes can be evaluated annually. The model identifies criteria for making choices and/or decisions on which programmes will be evaluated, and when evaluations should take place.

- **Programme evaluation process**

How will the process of programme evaluation be conducted? Programme evaluation should include the programme planning/development phase, programme implementation and programme outputs.

- **Policy review mechanisms/procedure**

How, how often and by whom will the policy be reviewed or revised?

Programme assessment criteria

- **Relevance:** Do the programme outcomes comply with educational and socio-economic requirements, i.e. does the programme provide the needs and expectations of learners, society and the labour market and higher education community? Is the programme relevant to the challenges of the global village and the information society?
- **Coherence:** Coherence should exist among the various components of the programme. Clear outcomes should be formulated and the contents, activities and resources, etc. should co-operate in achieving these outcomes. Programme coherence does not necessarily presuppose that a programme is accommodated in one disciplinary field only, but also leaves room for inter-disciplinary coherence.

- **Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods:** The appropriateness of the programmes' teaching/learning methods relates to the preceding criterion and is determined by the envisaged outcomes, contents, characteristics of the learner population, and required qualified staff. Another important consideration is the delivery mode of the programme.
- **Appropriateness of resources:** Programme quality depends upon the quality of the human, physical and financial resources available for the programme, and whether these resources are appropriate. This also closely relates to the preceding criterion.
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent does the programme succeed in achieving its proposed outcomes and objectives? Can this be done in a cost-effective way?
- **Quality of programme management:** Programme quality depends upon cautious management mechanisms and procedures that succeed in accomplishing co-operation amongst all of those involved in programme implementation.
- **Development and evaluation of basic skills and generic competencies (critical cross-field competencies and outcomes of the NQF/SAQA):** Basic skills and competencies as defined by SAQA should form part of the outcomes of all undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. These basic skills and competencies should be embedded into the programme content and should be assessed by means of formative and summative criterion-based assessment. These basic skills and competencies include:
 - problem-solving;
 - teamwork;
 - self-management and organization;

- gathering and processing information;
- effective communication;
- use of science and technology and
- understanding of the environment/world as a set of related systems.

Learners should also master the following:

- effective learning strategies;
 - responsible citizenship;
 - cultural and aesthetic sensitivity;
 - to explore educational and career opportunities and
 - to develop entrepreneurial opportunities
- **Forming of partnerships:** Programmes should give evidence of meaningful partnerships with appropriate partners. Such partnerships may have different aims and objectives varying from enhancing access for disadvantaged groups, to advancing specialized academic service. Partnerships can be formed with higher education partners inside and outside the region, further education partners, schools, community structures, private sector partners, etc. and can take on different partnerships structures.
 - **International recognition:** In relevant cases, the programme should be of such quality that it would achieve international recognition and contribute to learner mobility, also in the international arena.
 - **Contribution to the employability of learners:** The programme should effectively prepare learners to enter and function successfully on the labour market.

- **Benefits for society:** Seeing that the university also has social responsibility, the programme should aim the particular needs and demands of the citizens of the South African society. It should therefore be particularly directed towards preparing learners and equipping them to solve the problems and to meet specifically South African. Challenges.
- **Adding value to learners:** The programme should add value to learners in the intellectual, social, cultural, emotional and spiritual spheres.
- **Promotion of lifelong learning:** The programme should equip learners with attitudes and competencies which will enable them to learn throughout their lives, to equip them to face new challenges, situations, jobs, etc. and consequently function successfully in a rapidly changing environment.

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The book

As part of the political transformation in South Africa, universities have been confronted with manifold changes in their environment. Among these are a strong drive for state co-ordination, overall systems planning and quality management geared towards the establishment of common standards and accountability. The latter has led to the creation of the South African Qualification Authority and the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework.

As part of these changes at the national level, higher education institutions in South Africa have more recently been obliged to commit themselves to the development of quality management procedures at the institutional level. The University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) is no exception, but has a history of proactive initiatives in the domain of quality management.

This case study demonstrates how quality management at UOFS has changed over time. Prior to the abolition of apartheid when universities were relatively unaffected by governmental pressure, quality management was based mainly on institutional self-evaluation with a view to informing internal policy decisions. Since 1996, quality management at the university has been defined in accordance with national policies and global pressures and has been geared more towards accountability than quality improvement. Within this context, the case study focuses on changing underlying assumptions and procedures.

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